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WILD LIFE IN CHINA

OR

CHATS ON CHINESE BIRDS AND BEASTS.

BY

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PREFACE.

FEW words will be needed to establish friendly relations between one Nature lover and another. For nearly sixty years, considerably more than half of them spent in China, I have loved to study the forms and habits of every living creature with which I have come in contact, reptile life included. Unfortunately, this has been possible, not as a vocation, but as an avocation, during holidays, travels, and odds and ends of time in an otherwise busy life. During wanderings across the oceans, through Europe and Siberia twice, through a third of the United States, and along the ordinary Suez Canal Route between Europe and China notes have been made of such bird life as falls to the lot of the traveller to see.

These, however, are common to many observers. Those specially dealing with Wild Life in China are now put into popular form for the first time, and it is hoped that, notwithstanding many shortcomings, this may in itself form sufficient excuse for their appearance in permanent form. I am indebted more than I can say to "Les Oiseaux de la Chine", the scholarly work of M. L'Abbé Armand David, et M. E. Oustalet, to the late Mr. Consul Swinhoe's researches, to "The Royal Natural History" (Lydekker), to Mr. H. T. Wade's "With Boat and Gun in the Yangtze Valley", and to various other writers. To the ever present, ever new, and ever delightful stimulus of "The Field" and "Country Life" I, in

common with tens of thousands of other Nature worshippers, owe a constantly accumulating debt.

To the friendly critic who will find in stereotyped form and length of chapters, in faulty phrasing and style, in misprints here and there, and in other matters deserving criticism, many opportunities for the use of literary caustic I would say only this, that the papers first appeared in journalistic form in the pages of "The National Review" (China), that they were necessarily confined within certain prescribed space, and sometimes suffered in consequence. For the rest, the writing of them, rather hurried at times, was a labour of love, and if they find but few readers to whom they give some slight pleasure, such a reward will more than suffice.

G. L.

Shanghai, 1911.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

The Publishers are permitted through the kindness of Mr. Kingdon Ward to add as an Appendix to this book some account of Wild Life seen during the adventurous journey taken by himself and companions in 1910 through unbeaten tracks in some of the western districts of China. These papers, which appeared in "The National Review" from time to time, will be found full of the original observation of a man who sees and describes things and places rarely if ever seen by white men before.

* * * * *

As the order of the chapters on Bird Life was largely determined by the occurrences observed in the avian world from week to week these chapters constitute a rough guide to the doings of the birds during the year, and therefore the dates on which they appeared are inserted in the Table of Contents.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

Preface v
Publishers' Note vii
Contents ix
Introduction xiii

CHAPTERS.

I.—The Mysteries of Migration *(19th March)* 1
II.—Geese *(26th March)* 5
III.—Duck *(2nd April)* 9
IV.—Snipe *(9th April)* 13
V.—Woodcock *(16th April)* 17
VI.—Rooks and Crows *(23rd April)* 21
VII.—The Crow's Cousins *(30th April)* 25
VIII.—Some Shanghai Singing Birds *(7th May)* 29
IX.—Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns *(14th May)* 33
X.—Cuckoos *(21st May)* 37
XI.—Nests and Nestlings *(28th May)* 41
XII.—Flycatchers *(4th June)* 46
XIII.—The Kingfishers *(11th June)* 50
XIV.—Orioles and Rollers *(18th June)* 54
XV.—The Finches *(25th June)* 58
XVI.—The Tit Family *(2nd July)* 62
XVII.—Woodpeckers *(9th July)* 66
XVIII.—Pigeons, Doves and Sand-Grouse *(16th July)* 70
XIX.—Swallows, Martins, Swifts, and Night-Jars *(23rd July)* . . 74
XX.—The Shrikes *(30th July)* 78
XXI.—Mynas, Starlings, etc. *(6th August)* 82
XXII.—Plovers *(13th August)* 86
XXIII.—Plovers and Sandpipers *(20th August)* 90
XXIV.—Curlews, Whimbrels *(27th August)* 95
XXV.—Bustards, Rails, etc. *(3rd September)* 99
XXVI.—Quails *(10th September)* 103
XXVII.—Partridges *(17th September)* 107
XXVIII.—Pheasants *(24th September)* 111
XXIX.—Pheasants. *(Continued)* *(1st October)* 115
XXX.—Pheasants. *(Concluded)* *(8th October)* 119
XXXI.—Gulls *(15th October)* 123
XXXII.—Terns *(22nd October)* 127
XXXIII.—Cormorants and Pelicans *(29th October)* 132
XXXIV.—The Ibis and Crane *(5th November)* 137
XXXV.—Wagtails and Buntings *(12th November)* 141
XXXVI.—Autumn Migrants *(19th November)* 145

CHAPTERS. PAGE.

XXXVII.—Birds of Prey: Vultures *(26th November)* 149
XXXVIII.—Eagles *(3rd December)* 153
XXXIX.—Eagles. *(Continued)* *(10th December)* 157
XL.—Falcons: The Peregrine *(17th December)* 161
XLI.—Falcons: The Saker, Goshawk, Hobby, Merlin and Kestrel *(24th December)* 165
XLII.—Hawks and Harriers *(31st December)* 169
XLIII.—Buzzards and Kites *(7th January)* 173
XLIV.—Owls *(14th January)* 177
XLV.—Owls. *(Concluded)* *(21st January)* 181
XLVI.—Chinese Field Sports. 185
XLVII.—Chinese Field Sports. *(Continued)* 189
XLVIII.—Chinese Field Sports. *(Concluded)* 193
XLIX.—Tigers 197
L.—Tigers. *(Continued)* 201
LI.—Leopards and Lynxes 205
LII.—Wild Cats 209
LIII.—A Very Mixed Menagerie 213
LIV.—Some Big Game 217
LV.—Reptiles 222
LVI.—Fabulous Creatures 226
LVII.—Fabulous Creatures. *(Concluded)* 230
Appendix, The Big Game of Western China 237

INTRODUCTION.

Perhaps the oldest classical reference to the natural history of wild life known to the west is Genesis 1.29: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firamament of heaven." To the Chinese there will come to mind, amongst the earliest of theirs, some of the rhymed ballads contained in the "Book of Odes," for which the outer world as well as the Chinese is indebted to the selective editorial skill of the great deified sage, Confucius. It was he who out of some 3,000 metrical compositions selected the "Three Hundred"—actually three hundred and five—which he rightly held in such high esteem, and which are still a source of keen delight to myriads of modern scholars.

"Have you learnt the Odes?" he one day asked of his son.

"No," was the reply.

"Then you will be unfit for the society of intellectual men," was the crushing rejoinder.

Perhaps the impatient reader will want to know what the "Odes" have to do with the matter under consideration. The answer is ready. Even in the days of Confucius the "Odes" were a mirror of the long lost past. They presented a picture, or rather a series of pictures,of ancient Chinese thought and action. Being true in poetry they were true to nature, and it is here that their connexion with our subject is found. The close student will discover scattered through their pages references to nearly two hnndred plants and animals. Of these roughly a half are allusions to birds, beasts, fishes, and insects. They show that long ages before man thought of the first great Chinese Encyclopaedia, that of Wu Shu, (947-1002 A.D.), which deals largely with natural history, there was that love of nature amongst Chinese observers which has characterized them ever since, and which will by and by be one of the links most closely connecting them with the purest and best thought of the West.

I have no desire in these sketches to attempt a systematic and complete scheme of Chinese Natural History. Even the much admired work of M. l'Abbé

Armand David does not claim to be that, although it gives detailed information respecting some eight hundred species of birds alone. Such a work is not within the power of any one man to perform, without the aid of countless observers each dealing with some circumscribed area. For as all students of bird life know, there is still much to learn, many are the doubts to be cleared up, and not a few mistaken preconceptions have yet to be removed before Chinese natural history can be an exact science. What personal experience has suggested to me and my friends during a third of a century will be jotted down in due course, Nature herself throughout the "revolving year" being her own prompter as to the order in which the various divisions of the subject shall be taken. Classical severity of language, which must be the medium through which exact ornithology expresses itself, will be used as sparingly as possible. *Merula Sinensis* will sing none the less sweetly during these beautiful spring mornings if he is made to appear in his plain English dress of "Blackbird." But as we are a many-tongued people in the Far East just now, it will be advisable in most cases to supply in brackets, (I promise faithfully that it shall be in brackets), the technical names recognized by ornithologists everywhere. Otherwise it may happen that mistakes will occur, as for example, when such a misused name as "Crow" is employed. What does "Crow" stand for? Is it the French *Grolle*, or *Corbeille*? Is it the Chinese *Wu ya*, or the Chinese *Lao ya*? It is impossible to say, for there seems to be as much confusion in the Chinese and French as there is in English. But once let the technical *Corvus corone* be given, and all doubt is dispelled. The identity is certain. It is the crow we mean, that solitary, rather misanthropic bird, not the rook, which is *Corvus frugilegus*, a bird fond of the company of his fellows, and, as is unpleasantly evident in some parts of the Shanghai Settlement, not less so of that of man. Except, then, for purposes such as this, long-legged Latin terms will be carefully eschewed. The Chinese name of a thrush-like singing bird, *Hwa-mei*, is many times softer and prettier than *Leucodioptron Sinense*. Besides this, we are sure to find, as we proceed, that descriptions of one or two well-known species will suffice for the representation of large families less familiar, and so avoidance of dull detail will be all the more easy.

Mention has been made of Père David's great work. Others deserve like honour. Consul Swinhoe ranks high amongst these. Some forty years ago he was perhaps the greatest authority on Chinese Natural History. "The Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London" will be found to contain several contributions of the greatest importance

from his pen. There are, for example, his "Catalogue of the Mammals of China, south of the Yangtze, and of the Island of Formosa", his "Zoological Notes of a Journey from Canton to Peking and Kalgan", his papers on special birds, on reptiles, and on the "Natural History of Hainan". Some of these are illustrated by well drawn and beautifully coloured plates. Twenty years ago or more Mr. Styan, another enthusiastic bird-lover and collector, was Honorary Curator of the Shanghai Museum, for which he compiled a useful catalogue of the birds then housed there. His own collection of bird-skins, unique in its way, was once thrown open to public view in the rooms of the North China Insurance Company, then in the Hankow Road. I am not aware that Mr. Styan has written much on Chinese birds, a subject he might have adorned; probably not, as he had other calls on his time, but if I remember rightly, he contributed, some years ago, to the pages of "The Field" some graphic notes on bird life as he had seen it in the Yangtze valley. Of naturalists with the hunting instinct strong in them I could mention several. Those who have written, however, have usually taken up rather the material side of houseboating. Mr. Groom's was the earliest book on the subject. His "Sportsman's Diary" was indeed a diary as its name implied, but it was something more, for there were in it valuable notes on many things, including the habits of game birds. Its successor, Mr. Wade's "With Boat and Gun in the Yangtze Valley" was in every way an immense advance, and the second edition of that standard work now announced will doubtless further add to its quality and usefulness. In "Houseboat Days in China", Mr. Bland has largely sunk the sportsman in the naturalist. Bags are scarcely named, but the book is instinct with a love of wild life. He who shares this passion with Mr. Bland will be keenly sensible of his intimate sympathy with his surroundings and will, with him, revel in the open air delights of the cloudless skies of his winter holidays. When Mr. Bland listens to the early morning melody of a thrush in the magnolias of the Shanghai Public Garden, however, I should very much like to ask if he were quite sure it was not a blackbird, (*Merula Sinensis* as above), for it has never been my good fortune to catch a song- thrush in these latitudes in the act of song. Neither have I ever been charmed in this province of Kiangsu with the overhead song of the lark, which Mr. Bland more than hints at on the page following. Since this statement was first published, however, a courteous correspondent suggests that "in justice to Mr. Bland" I should take a trip to the sea wall, where, if the whether is fine in March, the skylark may be heard singing

overhead just as it does in Kent or Sussex. I am very much pleased to know this. My acquaintance with the sea-wall has, unfortunately, always been during the winter. The fact that the lark sings within so short a distance of Shanghai, and not at Shanghai, is another instance of a curious difference which I have noted in the bird life of closely contiguous districts in Kiangsu.

Of native sportsmen and true naturalists combined I have known two. One is dead. Neither of them ever wrote anything of his intimate bird knowledge either in Chinese or English, but both were sufficiently practical to be able to preserve such specimens of their prowess as they cared to keep. Of the market-supplying variety of "sporting" man I have met several, of whom more anon.

It is surprising how few people have eyes for the wonderful variety of wild life which boon Nature has showered upon China. If this be partly due to the forbidding nature of the scientific works on natural history there is no reason why it should continue, for with all the modern appliances for printing in colours, with a far more rational system of education which looks to Nature herself for inspiration, and with cheapened means of production, there is now so great a number of natural history productions that the difficulty is to know what to choose. And though, of course, there are many birds in this part of the world differing from those in western lands, yet there are still more which are either exactly alike or closely allied. The rook, the magpie, the sparrow, many of the finches, the thrushes, the water-fowl, the gamebirds and others are so nearly like those of Europe as to be indistinguishable except by an expert. The possession of a book of European birds would therefore be very useful to the bird seeker of China. In the sketches which follow it is hoped that though no complete system be attempted there will be information enough to stimulate that love for wild life which is a thousand-fold its own reward.

WILD LIFE IN CHINA:

Chats on Chinese Birds and Beasts.

Chapter I.

THE MYSTERIES OF MIGRATION.

Rudyard Kipling has many admirers: but his only worshippers are those who know his Jungle Stories. His tale of "The Spring Running" comes irresistibly to mind just now. A waving leaflet rouses the Black Panther, Bagheera. "The year turns" he said. "The Jungle goes forward. The Time of New Talk is near. That leaf knows. It is very good." He was talking to Mowgli, the Jungle Boy.

It is very good. Sunshine and warmth, flowers and fertility, the music of the woods, the fragrance of the fields: good indeed are they all. Nature moves. As Kipling says, we are in the spring running. Birds in particular are full of life, of joy, of motion. The time of migration has come. He would be brave indeed who dared to dogmatize on such a mystery. The how, the why, the when, the wherefore of it all is still to seek. Science collects her facts; that is her duty, and perhaps in some long distant time, when men can read the jungle life as Mowgli did, they then will be able to fit their odds and ends of truth together and proceed to tell the tale. Till then, it is to the poet we must go for inspiration. He kows that

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her: this her privilege.
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy."

That is our first clue. Wordsworth is right. "To lead from joy to joy," that is the lure by which Nature coaxes her children to do her will. "So careful of the type" is she. But it would be foolish to shut our eyes to the few facts which some of our ornithologists designate as laws. We may take some of these almost as gospel. We find, for example that every bird of the northern hemisphere breeds in its most northern habitat. The "spring running," then, is for the propagation of the species. That over, it seems to be equally certain that the turning south again is for food.

But here difficulties arise. In many cases the young migrate first whilst plenty of food remains. They travel, too, by night and at immense heights. With nobody to lead, nothing to direct, for even if they could see landmarks they could not recognize what they have never seen before, how do they find their way? Here we arrive at mystery almost at the threshold of our science. We are equally at a loss when asked to explain why the males of song birds precede their mates, and we certainly cannot tell why the migratory instinct should turn to nothingness so fundamental a passion as love of offspring. Yet so it is. The migrant mother caught by the autumn instinct whilst still her family cares are incomplete, forgets everything but the call of the south. Nest and nestlings go for naught, and the first care of herself and her spouse, on returning to their abandoned home in spring, is to rid the nest of the corpses of her own starved young! Mystery of mysteries, who shall unravel it?

There are pseudo-scientific pronouncements at which we can turn heavenwards a very dubious nose: such for example as that "All the regular migratory birds are insect eaters, or nearly so." Is the snipe such an one? or the goose? or the predatory bird which follows north the other migrants? Perhaps, also, we should count as questionable the statement that birds always take the same lines in their travels. For when we turn to consider our own case in China, it would seem as if the word "line" would have to be very elastic indeed to include the breadth here covered. There is a well-known Heligoland line of migration in Europe, which by and by we may be able fully to account for. Its breadth is comparatively little. But what are we to say of the line of spring migration in China which is probably a thousand miles across? Shall we not inevitably come to the conclusion that much depends on the configuration of the land? Were there a Himalayan range stretching from Tibet to Soochow, let us say, then doubtless there would be a line of migration passing over the coastline of this neighbourhood. But China has no such range. High-flying birds probably think nothing of ordinary mountain obstacles, and even those which keep low find the Chinese ranges conveniently running more or less in a northerly direction so that they may be skirted, or else provided with convenient gaps through which a passage may easily be found. There are few or no traps in which as in some lands birds are caught as in a *cul de sac*.

It must be remembered that according to their nature birds vary greatly in the manner of their migration. Usually the autumn migration is taken more leisurely by all. But even in the spring some kinds move along *li* after *li*, mile

after mile, to-day a little, to-morrow the same, and thus a warbler from Annam may take weeks to perform the same journey which a swift would cover, at his 200 miles an hour, in a single day. Many species also move but short distances, whilst others cover half a hemisphere, and perhaps more. And with their variety they also make mistakes at times, or else Dame Nature plays them false. One of the cocksure bits of dogmatism in "The Royal Natural History" (Lyddeker) is that no birds hibernate. Now most men who read their "Field" can remember cases when this subject has been discussed with evidence which should undoubtedly bring about at least a Scottish verdict of "Not proven." Personally I can remember many years ago watching with much interest the movements of some swallows hawking over a Hongkew ice-pond on the first of January! It was a beautifully bright sunny day. Had these birds migrated at that time, or were they hibernating somewhere here, and, bat-like, were awakened by the warmth? Evidently dogmatism is dangerous under such circumstances. On another occasion I was accompanied for some time when snipe-shooting in the early spring by a swallow nearly starving with cold and hunger. He flew round and round, nearly touching me as he passed. The weather was bitter for the time of year, and every self-respecting fly and mosquito was safely wrapped up in blankets hidden by leaves and blades of grass. Walking through the marshes I disturbed a number of these which drowsed lazily off only to be snapped up by my hungry little companion before they had gone a yard.

The movements at present going on in our bird world affect a very considerable number of the species best known to us. Most of the ducks, geese, and other water fowl are going north. They may be seen by day and heard by night, occasionally even seen when the moon is full, and they fly across its face. With them go the redwings and, I think, most other thrushes. The blackbirds do not move away except for an outing some time in the late summer, coming back again in October. The wag-tails go, and some of the bunting tribe. Travellers going home *via* Siberia may, if they cross about the end of May or the beginning of June, see ample proof of the immensity of this "spring running." Plain, marsh, field, and forest are alive with birds. Seebohm in his book on Siberian bird life gives graphic pictures of the profusion which has now been opened up to the eyes of all who have money and leisure. The train passes through various marshy districts and there, from the lordly swan which sails overhead down to the smallest teal, water fowl are to be seen. So also are waders, herons, and others. On the telegraph wires the cuckoo stands and cries. Hawks,

falcons, and other winged robbers are naturally there under such circumstances.

But what the China coast loses to the north it makes up from the south. Cuckoos are coming to us also, and before long the double cry of the variety which remains here for the early summer will be heard by night as well as by day. Numerous warblers are on the way and, though not specially noted for song, are an addition to the melody of our country rambles. The Chinese house-holder will be delighted with the return of his own particular family pet, a swallow, or martin; the egrets will soon have arrived, and later on others to which reference must be made in due course. There is an unceasing movement the whole year through. It is Nature's drama set in ever-changing scenery and with ever-varying music to delight mankind.

Chapter II.

GEESE.

With the "Spring Running" the sportsman in China ought for a little while to lay aside his gun. When you come to think of it he may enjoy shooting through a very large part of the year. But with the incoming of February no more field shooting should be indulged in, for pheasants not infrequently begin nesting during that month. A little later the spring snipe will have come, and then Nos. 8 and 9 may come into play once more. Meanwhile there is a breathing space to look up the life history of the migrants one sees. There are the geese, for instance. (Order, *Anseres:* Family, *Anatidae:* Species, various.) There is a little difficulty sometimes in remembering which is which. But a trick in mnemonics will fix the colours indelibly, the two black or dark coloured species both begin with B—the brent and bernicle geese. All the rest are grey. It was "the grey goose wing" which feathered all the arrows of Robin Hood and has left indelible marks on European history. The brents and bernicles, too, are sea rather than land birds as the others are. Another distinction is to be found in the shield, or "nail" as it is called, which protects the tip of the upper mandible. This is light coloured in all the grey geese, I believe, except the bean and the swan-goose which have it black.

For the purpose of identification the following condensed description will suffice. It includes all the geese commonly found in these parts.

Anser Albifrons. The white-fronted goose. Nail white. Forehead white, hence name. Beak orange. Black bars across the belly. Wings tinged with green. Length 27 in. Not common in this neighbourhood.

Anser Erythropus. The lesser whitefronted goose. Nail white. Appearance much as above. Length 24 in. Very numerous.

Anser Segetum. The bean goose. "Segetum" bears evidence to the destructive efforts of this bird in the cornfields. (Lat. *seges*, a corn-field.) Nail black. Legs. feet, and middle of beak, orange. Length, 35 in. Extremely common in Delta. Breeds far north.

Anser Cygnoides. The swan-goose. Nail black. Bill black. Dark stripe down back of neck. Probable ancestor of common domestic goose in China.

Anser Cinereus. The greylag goose. Nail white or whitish. Flesh-coloured beak and feet. Wing coverts and rump slaty grey. Abdomen white. Length 35ins. Probable ancestor of European domestic species; supposed by some to get its name from its habit of "lagging" behind other species at migrating times! But the Double Dorset for "leg" is "lag", and the tint of the leg is a greyish pink—a more likely derivation. Not very numerous here.

Anser nigricans. The Pacific brent goose. An occasional visitor. "Brent" is spelt "brant" in America, and is referred to "brand" and "brindled."

A wild-goose chase, notwithstanding the spice of sneering superiority which the user of the phrase sometimes tacitly arrogates to himself, is one of the most exciting, exacting, and at the same time healthful exercises which the sportsman can undertake. How he may set about it will best be found in the pages of "With Boat and Gun", where Mr. Duncan Glass and others tell the tale once for all. We may not all have a "Clutha" to take us out to the shooting ground, but other less lordly means are suggested. I have spent a comfortable night, when after duck, in the humble harbour sampan, but that was long ago. Shooting may be done from the punt, or ashore by dint of stalking, flighting, or driving. With the first, using a heavy punt gun and a pound of shot, the biggest bag to one discharge that I ever heard of was 52 geese got by Sir Charles Ross many years ago. One has to think of the market when asked to defend shooting of this sort. Also of the cornfields afore-mentioned, or the crofter's little patch in danger of utter extinction, and, as I have seen them, of the vast prairie fields of Oregon and California with (probably) *Anser Segetum* in hundreds and thousands at work on them. Of grass, eight geese devour as much as a cow! Bearing these facts in mind "browning a gaggle" whenever opportunity occurs is defensible. Personally I prefer single shots with the smaller weapon. Then the stalk is the thing. There they are out in the middle of the open country. Is there any cover? If not, the old world stratagem of the stalking horse, cow, or buffalo must be tried. A painted canvas counterfeit presentment of the last is used sometimes in China, the shooter and his confederate providing the legs, and working gradually up to their quarry. But the goose is a wary gentleman notwithstanding his reputation for stupidity. His sentries are well posted, and he keeps his weather eye open himself. If the operation is successful the bag will be all the heavier, but

the chances are with the geese. I had a successful stalk once of more than a mile, being favoured by a conveniently placed grave-mound. On the Tsungming Island, a paradise sometimes for wild-fowl, there are embankments and cuttings which are on occasion of great assistance to the gunner. But at other times it is tantalizing to the last degree to see thousands of geese, ducks, and sometimes swans within reach of the binocular without a chance of getting near any of them. Then comes the temptation to use a rifle which is so strongly and rightly condemned by Mr. Glass. Indeed, a time comes to all sportsmen—when the blood has had time to cool, and the innate hunting instinct has lost its pristine keenness—when there is a new delight in the sporting trip, the delight of seeing, of merely looking at nature in her brightest and her best. The flats down by the Beacon sometimes provide a sight for such a man which quite makes up for the loss of opportunity for mere killing. A good glass brings birds within a few yards, and then from the sunny side of an embankment they may be watched at rest and at play—a sight worth the journey even if the bag remains absolutely empty. But that same beautiful day may be the prelude to a blow, and then will come the chance inland, perhaps. Rough water outside means opportunities along the creeks, and a right and left well brought off under those conditions is far more satisfying to the artistic sense than the holocaust of an entire gaggle with the punt gun.

Of all sportsmen it is the wild-fowler who must be most saturated with knowledge of times and seasons, of tides and winds, of feeding grounds and of resting places. Geese act with great regularity in most of their movements. If left alone they feed by day, and only if persecuted take to the night for safety. It is this regularity which is their ruin if the fowler is acute enough to discover its variations and act accordingly. Day by day he needs to study their movements. He watches their stately flight, a thing unique in nature for majesty of movement, and unexpected grace. He notes their line to and fro, then, some boisterious evening perhaps, he reaps his reward in the finest flight shooting that ever delighted man. I knew of one once who happened more or less by accident to light upon a spot over which dusk found gaggle after gaggle passing. So he thanked the gods and accepted the opportunity. Standing on the bow of his boat well under cover of a bank, he had a succession of good sporting chances of which he made the most. One bird happened to come rather lower than the other and as it was travelling fast and the well placed charge did its work with merciful promptitude, the way of the bird to earth was marked by a trajectory which evidently would bring it

on the boat. Unluckily the gunner stood right in the way, and before he could move, a number of foot-pounds, compiled of the body of a heavy goose and its headlong flight, impinged on his sporting breast and the owner found himself completing the trajectory by somersaulting backwards into the water!

Chinese bird life, so our late fellow resident in Shanghai, Dr. Edkins, tells us somewhere, was not altogether unknown to Pliny. Since that time a very great amount of knownledge has been accummulated, but nothing has done so much for the exactitude of our knowledge of outer nature as the use of photography. With the telephoto-lens it is now possible to transfer to paper wild nature in its true form and in its natural habitat. In all probability the delight of such a study will attract many to the life history of birds and beasts who hitherto have been repulsed by the difficulty of the language employed and by the no less unattractive nature of some of the illustrations. In these chats dry science is according to our understanding eschewed, but its importance must never be forgotten.

Chapter III.

DUCK.

"The wild geese wing o'er the isles their way." So says a poet in the *Shi King* and having seen them go we may turn to the ducks, many of whom are not in so great a hurry. Some are even now coming to us from the south. In all probability the sportsman in this part of the world sees during the year a hundred times as many ducks as he does geese, if under the term ducks we place the multitudinous varieties which may bear the name. The province of Kiangsu is an ideal home for them. "Water water, everywhere", and rarely any ice to speak of. The vast extent of the Yangtze estuary, the long line of coast stretching round to the Hangchow Bay, with its immense mudflats, the lake district about Soochow, culminating in the Tai Hu, whose waters alone would cover more acres probably than all the lakes and ponds of England, the vast marshes here and there, and finally the thousands of miles of creeks, form a paradise for ducks and water birds generally. No wonder we see them by the thousand. English sportsmen go across to Holland for the express purpose of finding similar, though far less perfect, conditions.

Not being tied by any trammels of logic we may conveniently range the ducks most frequently coming into our ken into the two classes, Divers and Non-divers, or those who seek food under, and those who find it on or near the surface of water. The latter are by far the more numerous. They are all night-feeders, spending the day either at sea or in some safely secluded spot inland. In the following notes, the numbers in brackets refer to the usual length of the adult male given in inches.

We will begin with the mallard, or wild duck proper. (*Anas boschas.*) (24) There is nothing in nature more beautiful in its way than the male of this species. Note his beautifully curved green head, the ruddy brown of his graceful neck with its white collar, his blue wing coverts, the crisp curl of his tail and the general charm of his white plumage, and then say if you ever saw anything more fitted to adorn the foreground of a picture of sea and land. He loses all this beauty, by the way, when family cares come on, but dons it again with

the approach of winter, as do some others of his kind. Properly, the word "mallard" is applicable only to the male, and is so used in Dorsetshire. To talk of a "mallard-duck," as some people do, is as preposterous as it would be to speak of a "stallion mare." Like her domesticated descendants, the wild Duck is a good breeder, laying her 10 or 11 eggs per annum. Wary in the extreme is she, her nest being carefully hidden, often at some distance from water. Her young, which for a long while are unable to fly, have then to run the gauntlet of land foes till they reach the water, and when there are frequently snapped up by hungry pike.

In this neighbourhood wild ducks spend some seven months of the year, leaving in April. A few breed in the neighbourhood. I remember one brood in the Chapoo Creek in August.

The pintail, or sea pheasant, (*Dafila acuta*) so called from the five-inch length of the middle pair of tail feathers, which make him longer than the mallard (26). In appearance he will bear comparison with the true wild duck, though his tints are mainly browns and greys with black pencillings. He is plentiful in season and is excellent eating, very strong and rapid in flight, and not easy to kill with on-coming shot owing to the density of his breast plumage.

The gadwall, (*Anas Strepera*, or *Chaudelasmus streperus*), is a chestnut-headed duck with black and white markings on the wings (28). It is not one of our common visitors.

The Teal (*Querquedela crecca.*) (14½). A lovely little bird, very plentiful, and all too trusting. Nothing but his lightning rise and rapid flight saves him from far more terrible decimation than he now suffers. Sometimes, in the days gone by, almost every pond in the Kashing and Hangchow districts held him and the confident gunner went up ready for his right and left. Only, however, if he had learnt the knack,,for in most cases a griffin discovered that both first and second barrels were wasted on empty air, the first under, the second behind, his birds. He is a hungry little fellow is the teal and like Sairey Gamp likes his nourishment whenever "dispoged", by night or day.

The widgeon, (*Mareca Penelope*) (18). A creamy white forehead, with chocolate cheeks and neck, together with a greyish white back and black pencillings are amongst the distinctive marks of his species. Sir Ralph Payne-Galiwey once killed, with a charge of 6 oz. of powder and 32 oz. of shot, no fewer than 148 of them, a form of market provision which has its advocates and its justification, but which to me suggests the advisability of writing to the Admiralty to point out how much more the Dreadnaught might do in the same line!

The shoveller *(Spatula clypeata)* gets his name from his broad-tipped bill. By no means a dainty eater, under some conditions he is said to be very good eating (20). I have seen one only of this species in the Huangpu.

Of diving ducks we may mention —

The pochard, *(Fuligula ferina)* and the tufted duck *(F. cristata)* neither of which is abundant here. The former is sometimes known at home as "The Redheaded Poker", from the ruddy chestunt of his cranium. He is difficult of approach, far more so than his cousin the tufted duck, which rather trusts to swimming than flying for escape.

Confined to the East, and therefore specially interesting, is the extremely beautiful *Aix galericulata* or mandarin duck, which adds to the beauty of its gorgeous purple, green, white and chestnut colouring an equal beauty in crest and curl. It perches on trees, and is a model of conjugal love and fidelity. Another of the pochard family is the Siberian white-eyed duck *(Fuligula baeri)*, said to be numerous at times, though scarce as a rule.

Duck-shooting has, of course, an affinity with that which lays low the goose, but from the greater numbers of species and individuals, and from the fact that many kinds of ducks delight in inland waters at times, if not altogether, the ordinary China sportsman finds the latter far more often coming to bag than is the case with the weightier goose. Punt, decoy, and flight shooting may be had, however, as well as the haphazard opportunities of the day's tramp. Two of my friends once had a spell of splendid flight shooting from behind the cover of the parapet of a city wall! But I have never known a China sportsman who has made such a business of wildfowling as to go through a season with an average of 39½ birds per shot, a number which I find recorded with some pride by the performer! I hope I never shall. A fact to be noted is this, that ducks always come into and up the wind before alighting. If shooting in the moonlight the gunner will find the birds more clearly defined if he shoots towards the light. The size of shot used varies all the way from No. 6 for teal to A, B, and even SSG. Ducks have always been considered fair sport for everybody. In days gone by a whole Norfolk village would turn out headed by the parson and the squire for a spell on the marshes when the autum flights came in.

Of the mergansers or sawbills, Mr. Wade mentions three in his book, the goosander, the red-breasted merganser, and the smew. These, however, are fish-eaters, not ducks, and the serrations or teeth along the edges of their manibles make one think of the toothed birds of bygone epochs. The grebes, too, may be mentioned amongst the

water birds common in Kiangsu. I once got a crested variety but was unable to identify it, and another, without the crest, some distance down the river. Then there is the dabchick, ubiquitous, interesting, and very much at home. Go where we will he is sure to be found. Even quite small creeks afford him food and shelter, and only last Christmas, when we had two or three cold days and some of the creeks were frozen, I found him in a creek close to the steps outside a village street and, taking care not to alarm him, watched his proceedings for some minutes. Then on seeing me, up went his tail, down went his head, and so far as one could discover he might have dived down to the antipodes, though there is no doubt he was well within reach watching, from under a bit of cover close to the bank, the "foreign devil" who dresses so outrageously and outlandishly as to frighten innocent little grebes. Having given up long distance flying apparently, the dabchick seems never to migrate. All seasons find him in his accustomed haunts equally happy, and equally at home.

Chapter IV.

SNIPE.

At any time during the last days of March or the first few of April may be heard the welcome intelligence that "The snipe have come." "Snipe," old English "snite," and "snout" are the same word, Grimm's law intervening. Drayton writes of "The witless woodcock, and his neighbour snite." It would be hard to tell exactly why the sport-loving British people have picked out certain birds, the woodcock and snipe, for instance, for particular attention, to the entire disregard of so many others. The snipe is very good eating, it is true, but so are several others of which little is said. Something must be allowed for the mystery attaching to them, but probably the chief reason is the difficulty of bringing the common snipe to bag when he is in really good form and a wee bit wild. Then his movements are of the zig-zag, "greased lightning" type, and rights and lefts are very, very rare indeed. A friend of mine once watched an attack by a hawk on a snipe in mid-air. Two or three times the swoop was made but each time the snipe's speed was enough to save his skin. Again, he is here to-day and gone to-morrow. He may be seen in wisps or he may not be seen at all. Essentially he is a bird of the swamp or marsh, not of the too fluid sort, but of that kind which provides a sufficiently soft upper crust to suit at once the worms and his delicate bill. Then, under suitable conditions, he disposes of double his own weight of these long red delicacies in one day. Imagine a 20-stone man eating fifty four-pound loaves, ten legs of mutton, a picul of potatoes, half a picul of vegetables, and something over a hundredweight of accessories within the 24 hours! That would be his task were he to try to rival *Scolopax Gallinago*, otherwise known as the common, or full, or whole snipe, and sometimes as the heather-bleater, from the so-called "drumming" made by his wings or tail in spring in his efforts to charm his mate. There are many square miles of the province of Kiangsu which form almost ideal snipe grounds. So it is in the delta of the Nile, and in various Indian deltas where a bag of a hundred couple a day to a single gun may be got at times. Mud, slush, chilly water, cold winds, wet feet, numbed hands, slipping, sliding,

missing, and execration may be amongst the accompaniments of this fascinating sport. Or it may be enjoyed under the most comfortable of conditions, for the snipe dearly loves warmth, and even dryness, when the rapid process of his digestion demands it. Then he will be found on grassy patches where a bit of cover keeps off the wind but lets in the sun, and then, too, he is apt to be lazy.

Mr. Styan (*vide* "With Boat and Gun") gives a list of seven varieties of snipe to be met with in China whilst David mentions only five. Latham's snipe *(Gallinago Australis)* does not come so far north as the Yangtze; the solitary snipe *(G. solitaria)* is very uncommon; the painted snipe, *(Rhynchea capensis)* not a true snipe, is indigenous to the Yangtze valley though not very plentiful; and the jack snipe *(G. gallinula)*, which is likewise scarce. That leaves us with the three plentiful varieties: the common, or as we best know it, the winter snipe; the pintailed, or lesser spring snipe *(G. stenura)*; and the great spring snipe, or Swinhoe's. The commonest and best method of deciding which is which of birds so alike in plumage as the varieties of snipe has been found to be, after consideration of weight, to count the tail feathers. The heaviest of all snipe is the great or solitary snipe which runs between 7½ and 10 oz. The jack is the lightest, his dainty little body turning the scale at something over 2 oz. The common snipe runs from 3 to 8 oz.; Swinhoe's from 6 to 8 oz.

The tail feathers are found as follows: Common, 14; Solitary, 20; Swinhoe's, 20; Pin-tailed, 26; Latham's, 18. The number of stiff feathers, consisting of little more than the quill, which give the pintail his name, varies in the different species, from 16 out of the 26 in the pintailed, to 4 out of 18 in Latham's. But even with such means of identification it is very difficult for the ordinary sportsman to distinguish the varieties with any certainty, for the variations in each species are wide. The pure white belly of the winter snipe marks him off from the spotted or barred lower parts of others.

Many an ardent sportsman, however, never cares to trouble his head about such niceties as these. To him a snipe is a snipe whether Swinhoe, Tatham, or any other man had the honour to stand sponsor to it. The bird is brought to bag. It has provided for the exercise of the body, the brain, the hand, and the eye. It has tempted from the desk, the office, or the study, the man who has secured it, and now it will provide a further pleasure for him or his friend in fulfilling its destiny when served up, nicely browned with a bit of choice bacon over it, at the dinner table. Why bother over counting tail feathers, or going about with a weighing

machine! Sufficient unto the shot is the sport thereof. But notwithstanding all this, there is yet a pleasure in store, the pleasure of reminiscence, the pleasure of recalling incidents long gone by, of watching from the comfortable depths of a cosy armchair, and through the curling wreaths of a Virginian weed, the adventures by marsh and swamp which memory brings up so vividly. There is the sea-wall just as you found it on a certain China New Year holiday. On the land side of it, there is a long stretch of watery waste never more than a hundred yards wide, but extending out of sight each way. Snipe are there by the score and they rise singly, too, the second and the third often being so obliging as to wait till new cartidges are in, and a move is being made to pick up the first dropped bird. Then up goes another of them, and so the bag grows heavier and anticipation keener. Those which go off as if for good are sure to be found again half a mile further on. Noon comes with its brilliant sun and glorious warmth. One is glad to sit on the sunny side of the wall, count the victims, and their tail feathers if any doubt arises, and bask awhile. Tomorrow we will have a repetition of the sport. But, alas, during the night the inevitable north-wester comes down, and birds which today would sit and watch you, whilst you stood and watched them, are now as wild as March hares. 'Sca-ape' they go, whilst you are yet fifty yards away, and fifty yards is far too great an allowance to give to a winter snipe. His fat and lazy friends of autumn and spring, which will hardly flap out of your way before they go down again, may be given "law" to a liberal extent, but *Scolopax vulgaris* when lively must be attended to at once, if he rises anywhere near thirty yards. No. 8 is best calculated to bring him to bag, though I have often found No. 6 in the left barrel useful, especially when something bigger may get up. He is not half so hard to kill, however, as the golden plover. Circumstances must decide how he is to be approached, down wind if lying well, if not, up. When flighting, he offers the best shooting in the world, if skill be counted, but the pleasure, taken as it is in the dusk, is fleeting and uncertain. He is then on business intent, going for the evening meal which his very healthy digestion makes so necessary, and generally travelling at express rate. If there is frost and he is frozen out of his usual haunts, he will come boldly wherever open water presents. I have recently seen two feeding within 39 ft. of the trams on the Avenue Paul Brunat. I have seen, in crossing the Rockies, a snipe alight within 20 ft. of a moving train. In the olden days, before Shanghai had grown to its present size, the Racecourse was a very favourite place on which snipe would drop in season, and legend tells

of a cricketer "out in the country" getting a number of pellets (intended for winged game) through the most exposed portion of the flannels as he stooped to pick up a ball! Guns were kept in the cricket pavilion ready for a sudden rush when a wisp was seen to alight. I have myself shot winter snipe within 106 yards of the back of the General Hospital, where they came to the ice-ponds, and one of those unaccountably popular patches, which snipe will frequent if any are about, is now covered by part of the Shanghai Railway Station.

Snipe-shooting needs above all things a well-fitting gun. I knew a man here who was once asked to try a new weapon on behalf of a friend. He did so, and when the first ten snipe were brought to bag with it, one after another without a miss, he concluded that it would be a very good thing if the friend bought that gun so that it might be borrowed! A 12-bore is unquestionably best for the ordinary man, though really first-rate shots do excellently with the lighter 16-bore. Taken altogether, snipe-shooting is as good a sport as can be found, and when there are such admirable artists as Thorburn and Millais to depict birds for us, and such ardent lovers of nature as Mr. Selous to write, there is prepared, for all who care to buy, an indoor delight which ranks only second to that beneath the vault of Heaven's blue.

Chapter V.

WOODCOCK.

If our knowledge of the snipe can hardly be called complete, it must be acknowledged that our acquaintance with the woodcock is still less so, and this in spite of the many pages of print to which this favourite bird has given rise. Within the last few weeks, (March 1910,) Mr. Ogilvie Grant writes to the Ornithological Club respecting some observations which he has just made. He refers to the resemblance between woodcock males and females. Only a post-mortem examination, he says, can distinguish the one from the other. Then he proceeds to tell of his experience in the Azores where his examination discovered males in the proportion of ten to one female, a fact I have seen hinted at nowhere else. And after various other statements he asks whether it is possible that the woodcock is polyandrous and, if so, whether this accounts for the fact that in various parts of the world young woodcock are found at all stages of development through all the warm months of the year. Is it the male which brings up the young whilst the mother is continuously laying? If so, the object of the protective colouring of both sexes is evident. Another fact which Mr. Grant vouches for will be a surprise to many, and that is that numbers of woodcock breed in the Azores. The usual idea is that their nesting places are much farther north.

I have referred to this matter at so much length in order to show how very much we still have to learn of this interesting bird, and how eagerly new discoveries respecting it will be accepted by the bird-loving world.

Scolopax Rusticola, as the woodcock is called scientifically, provides, perhaps, one of the finest examples of protective colouring that Nature has ever made. So perfect is it that its owner is usually quite justified in his perfect faith in its hiding powers. Even when wounded he disdains to run, but squats in the nearest bit of cover. His bright eye, however fitted for the night work to which he puts it, is sometimes his betrayer. Occasionally, too, Nature plays him the trick she does to many others of her children, and turns him out an albino, pure white.

The female woodcock is larger than the male, and its weight varies so widely as to run between eight and twenty-seven ounces. The former was perhaps a starved specimen, and the latter one abnormally fat for, like the snipe, the woodcock is a tremendous glutton, and is soon up and down in weight. At will, the woodcock can fly either as lazily as a rail or as swiftly as a swallow. He traverses long distances across the sea when migrating and is frequently at such times found taking a rest on coasting steamers running in and out of Shanghai. The lighthouse keepers, too, find that he has sometimes provided a dainty change in lighthouse fare by dashing himself against the lantern during the night. A Heligoland observer has estimated that migrating birds, when descending from their immense travelling height on to the mud-flats there, pass over the last mile at the rate of 240 miles an hour, that is to say, the last mile, which has been carefully observed, is done in fifteen seconds! Woodcock pair in February, and in England the nest has been found in March, though young in all stages of growth are also to be found in August. Being nocturnal in its habits, the woodcock is not an easy bird to watch. Hence much of the mystery surrounding it. Still, a good deal is known, sufficient to dispel some of the older doubts and set at rest some of the earlier questions. Three or four form the usual number in a clutch of woodcock eggs. Whether or no the male helps in the hatching is, as has been said above, a moot point. One thing is sure: the young when hatched are carried to their food and not the food to them. "The Royal Natural History" (Lyddeker) says that the young are pressed between the thighs during this operation, but trustworthy observers have proved that, however this may be, the parent can take up a young one in each claw and fly off with them. Mr. Archibald Thorburn's picture showing a little woodcock having the pleasure of a ride in this manner is one of his happiest efforts.

From facts of this sort it might well be supposed that the character of the woodcock for stupidity is as little deserved as is that of the goose. In France, a stupid person and a wo odcock rejoice in the same cognomen, "Grand bee." "O this woodcock! what an ass it is," says Shakespeare. And yet, the woodcock, besides showing uncommon intelligence in the conveyance of its young rather than in the unceasing carrying of food, is also an accomplished nurse, and can bind up wounds and even broken limbs with the skill of a practised surgeon. This is vouched for by M. Fatio of the Geneva Natural Society. I cannot corroborate it from personal knowledge of the woodcock, but I can of the snipe, for I once shot a poor, thin specimen when the weather was very open and all the rest fat, which had been wounded in the side, the

hurt being very skilfully covered with a plaster of congealed blood and feathery substance nicely smoothed over.

A question of some interest has at times occupied sportsmen and ornithologists. Do the snipe and woodcock hear or smell their vermicular prey? They cannot of course see it, for it is inches beneath the suface of the soil. Any one who cares to watch a blackbird hunting for food after a shower of rain can hardly fail to come to the conclusion that he, at any rate, uses his ears as well as his eyes when finding food. He gives a hop or two, and stops: another hop or two, and another stop. Did he just catch a promising sound a foot or two off to his right front? It looks like it. Another hop or two in that direction and then, for two or three seconds, he stands the very incarnation of listening: head to one side, eye cast up, every muscle still, and the whole body forming a hopeful interrogation-point. It does not take all this time to decide the question. A second or two, and the answer comes. If favourable, there is another hop forward, a confident dig with the beak at a certain spot in the ground, and out come three or four inches of fresh food. If the snipe or the woodcock have any such power of hearing, we have no definite record of it. What we do know is that the beak is a mass of nerves admirably adapted for the most delicate operations of touch, and for the discovery of worms.

What was said of the liking which snipe show for certain favourite spots is equally applicable to the woodcock. In the daytime during the winter certain clumps of evergreens in the Kashing district used to be a certain find if 'cock were in the neighbourhood. They are specially fond of holly for a covering, and they lie very close. Last Christmas a native gunner with a mongrel dog put one out from a little grave mound which I had but just passed. I had no dog, however. The deadly jingal did its work, and a fine bird went into the bottom of the little boat which carried the sportsman on his way. I once saw a 'cock just about where Mr. Evans's book-store now stands in the North Szechuen Road, and at the proper season have met with them practically all over the parts of the province usually patronized in shooting trips. The 'cock provides either extremely easy or extremely difficult shots. In the open he will at times flap along like an owl, but when in cover and really alarmed, the way he darts about amongst the trees is extremely disconcerting. In cold blustery weather they rather like the comfort of a deep-cut gully or ditch. If flushed from amongst bamboos they usually afford easy shots.

One 'cock often means many. For though the most solitary of all birds perhaps, and the most independent so far as gregarious movements are concerned, yet the instinct to

travel seems to affect a considerable number at the same time, and then a flight may last for some hours, the birds dropping in singly all the time. Similarly they may all disappear at the same time. There is on record a bag of 102 'cock shot in one day by a single gun, and that an old fint-lock. It was made as the result of a bet by Lord Clermont, County Cavan, Ireland. He wagered 300 guineas that he would shoot 100 woodcock in a single day on his Irish marshes. Between 2 and 3 p.m. the task was completed with a brace to spare.

Chapter VI.

ROOKS AND CROWS.

An unobservant person might perhaps go through the month of February without noticing much activity amongst the black-coated fraternity on his nearest trees, but he could not fail to see that, with March, the rooks had given up their regular morning and evening migration to and from the fields, and had busied themselves with house-building. April finds their nests clamorous with young, and, from the first streaks of auroral light to the last touches of the dying day, parent birds know hardly a minute's rest. Then comes the most interesting work of all, the schooling of the young birds in the art of flight. It does not take long, but is brimful of excitement whilst it lasts. One might almost declare that there is little less of human than of avian interest in it, for nobody who has ever taught children to swim, and has watched the efforts of old rooks with their new-fledged offspring, can fail to see that the methods, the encouragement, the incentives, and the gentle pushings on the one side are as characteristic of the teacher in each case as are the dread, the doubt, and the hanging back on the part of the taught. The "Oh, I shall be drowned!" is no more distinct on the part of the timid boy than is the "I can't: I shall fall," on that of the young rook. Then comes a chorus of praise and delight when a few successful strokes have been taken, followed by a dawning of confidence on the part of the neophyte, soon to be confirmed so strongly that the period of teaching is soon at an end. Then are seen those glorious collective lessons when parents and young set forth together to learn how to perform manœuvres in the air which put all human military movements in the shade by their intricacy, their picturesqueness, and their precision, and the "free wheeling" part of which some of the crow family are capable. Following this, *Corvus Sinensis*, the common rook of China, appears to take a summer holiday. The whole family disappears from its usual haunts and remains away usually till late in August. Then come re-unions once more. Flocks of hundreds at a time may be seen on the Racecourse in Shanghai, and it is my belief that even so early in their career the young ones have begun to come to a sort of mutual understanding. Engagements are not as

yet announced, but it is evident that there is something in the wind. Still more apparent is it when in the late autumn one notes that new nest sites are being selected. One puts two and two together, and next spring makes them four!

All this, of course, refers to rooks, not crows. Many people, even scientists, find it difficult to distinguish between the different species of the corvine family. David mentions four varieties in China, *Corvus Corax*, the raven: *Corvus Sinensis*, the Chinese rook, *Corvus corone*, which we know at home as the carrion crow, and *Corvus Torquatus*, that is the crow with a (white) collar. But other ornithologists differ in their nomenclature of these and other birds, and where doctors differ laymen may well be silent. The best of all distinctions, however, is the fact that whilst rooks are fond of their own society and that of man, crows are mainly of a solitary disposition, a pair holding loyally together whilst life lasts but keeping all others at a distance, except perhaps their own young during their first year.

Everybody knows of the raven, though few comparatively are intimately acquainted with him. I, personally, have seen none in Kiangsu, but in and about Peking he seems to be fairly common. English literature is full of allusions to him, and the stories of his deeds are endless. The raven in "Barnaby Rudge" is a familiar friend to all readers of Dickens. And nobody who knows Edgar Allan Poe is likely to forget that visitor who came "gently rapping at my chamber door" and to every question that was addressed to him answered gravely "Nevermore." Own cousin to him in everything but size is *C. corone*, the crow, but for some reason or other literary men have neglected the crow. He figures mainly in old women's fables and brings luck, good or ill, according to the number seen together. Sportsmen and keepers look askance at all the crow tribe. They have reason, for the raven and the crow are undoubtedly able and willing to do harm in a variety of ways. They kill the young of other birds, and they are arrant egg stealers. Young rabbits, and hares, lambs, and even sickly adult sheep and deer sometimes fall a prey, for the raven has the intelligence to know how to organize combined attacks. The consequence is that the "Keeper's Museum", generally the side of some wooden outhouse or barn, is kept pretty full of the hanging bodies of the corvine tribe. Even the rook, helpful as he is to the farmer under ordinary circumstances, will at times so far forget himself as to adopt the bad habits of the raven and the crow. I have seen a golden oriole in hot chase after a rook in a garden on the Bubbling Well Road, a sure sign that the "sooty varmint" had been foraging near the yellow bird's nest. Only a few days ago there was much unac-

customed clamour from a pair of my blackbird friends. On looking for the reason, I saw a rook within a few feet being vigorously attacked. The white-necked crow is especially a Chinese bird. There are crows of sorts in Siberia having light-greyish coloured backs and breasts. Their habitat extends all the way from Vladivostok to Holland during the warm weather, but they are not the same as our "collared" bird here. Their feathers are not so white, nor are the birds themselves so big. The semi-solitary life of *Corvus Torquatus* marks him off from the rook, and ranks him with the crow.

In England it is considered good for a rookery to be shot over every year, just when the young birds have attained their first full power of flight. The rook rifle is then brought into play, and a good deal of execution done, always amongst the young birds, the old ones being allowed to escape scot free. In China nobody ever thinks of thinning the ranks like this. The consequence is that rooks increase to such an extent as to become not only a nuisance but a menace to other and more desirable birds. Shanghai, where thirty years ago there were so few that they were actually permitted to nest on the Bund, is now over-run with then, so much so that in some parts of the Settlement the footpath has to be avoided for sufficient, if not good, reasons. The day has gone when the life history of a pair of rooks was recorded in frequent paragraphs in the daily paper.

Dr. Romanes, in his delightful book on "Animal Intelligence" tells several excellent stories of the general intelligence of the crow family. In one of these we see a dog which has secured a piece of meat that is greatly desired by some crows near by. They approach in skirmishing order. There is a growl and a dash and off they go. Only to return, however. The tactician of the party has matured his plan. Two or three approach from the front, whilst one gets still nearer from the rear. This one manages to get in a most vicious dig on the dog's tail, and is instantly chased in consequence. Then comes the psychological moment. The others dash in, seize the meat conjointly and bear it off in triumph to the top of a wall where the dog has the pleasure of seeing it eaten. Any one who has seen the crows of India and Ceylon can well believe such a story. If ever impudence were sent incarnate into this world of ours it is in the body of the Indian crow. Such arrant thieves are they that it is no uncommon thing for them to enter rooms and make off with whatever takes their fancy; just as readily will they rob the stall of the street vendor or the tray of hotel waiter, if there is anything on it that attracts them.

But perhaps the most extraordinary of all the characteristics of the whole family is the sense of corvine law. In what

code this is laid down is, of course, unknown to us. But it exists. We have all seen it being applied in its summary kind whenever nesting is going on, never, be it remembered, when eggs have arrived. Then nobody is to be molested. But before that, a theft of twigs from an unfinished nest is the signal for action by the police. The Supreme Court comes into view only occasionally, but there are many well authenticated cases recorded. Perhaps gentlemen of the corvine bar refer to them when poor unfortunates are brought up for trial. For trial there is, full, solemn, and complete. A large assemblage of birds surrounds the offenders. Formalities are duly carried out. There is much discussion apparently, and finally verdict is pronounced. If guilty, as seems to be the usual thing, execution is instant. The convicts are set upon, and pecked and beaten to death. The Bishop of Carlisle tells of the trial of a jackdaw by rooks. He says, "First Jack made a speech which was answered by a general cawing of rooks : this subsiding, Jack again took up the parable, and the rooks in turn replied in chorus." Finally he was acquitted and went to his home on Ely Cathedral whilst the rooks also went their way.

Chapter VII.

THE CROW'S COUSINS.

Many people will perhaps be surprised to learn that amongst the crow family there are some of the most beautiful birds in nature. "As black as a crow" is popularly supposed to cover the whole tribe. But that is a mistake which never ought to outlast life in the nursery. Some of the most delightful birds in China, from a colour point of view, are to be found amongst the cousins of the rook now so prominent an object in our avian life. I will return to them directly, but in the meantime the chough and daw should have that share of attention which is due to interesting traits rather than to brilliance of plumage. The Indian crow and his incarnate mischief have been referred to before. In this respect the common jackdaw will well bear comparison with his tropical counterpart. I have known him wild: I have known him tame. I have seen his tricks when, with one wing clipped, he hopped and fluttered about the farm-yard, a feathered monarch of all he surveyed. Was anything lost, especially anything bright, spoons, brooches, or the like, it was Jacko: and sure enough when his hoard was found, there was a collection of missing articles enough to send half a county to gaol. But all the country people loved Jacko nevertheless. They never knew that he belonged to the genus *Corvus* still less that he had a qualifying adjective, *Dauricus* or *Monedula*, but those of them who were acquainted with the Ingoldsby Legends knew "The Jackdaw of Rheims" almost by heart, and were sometimes quite ready to agree with the verdict therein expressed, that "The devil must be in that little jackdaw." When the Cardinal's ring had disappeared, they knew in a moment where it had gone to, or rather, who had taken it. They laughed a half heretical laugh at the declared effect of the Cardinal's curse on the thief, whoever he might be. It would have taken a good deal of real hard cursing to affect Jacko they thought. But the skill of the description was enjoyed to the full:—

The Monks and the Friars they searched till dawn;
When the Sacristan saw, On crumpled claw,
Come limping a poor little lame jackdaw,
No longer gay, As on yesterday:
His feathers all seemed to be turned the wrong way,
His pinions drooped, he could hardly stand,
His head was as bald as the palm of your hand,
His eye so dim, So wasted each limb,
That heedless of grammar, they all cried "That's him."

So of course it was, for "midst the sticks and the straw was the ring in the nest of that little jackdaw."

We do not see many jackdaws in Shanghai though there are plenty of them in the province. So of choughs, which are usually more abundant nearer the coast line or the mouth of the Yangtze. *Graculus eremita* is the red-billed or common chough. But he is a step farther from the true crows than the magpie which so often claims attention.

Pica Caudata is the classic name of the common magpie, which seems to be nearly ubiquitous. All over Europe and Northern Asia he is found. All over China, and in the Western States of America, but, if I remember rightly, not in the Eastern. Much of what has been said of the jackdaw might be told of the magpie. When tamed he is a charming pet, companionable, talkative, and full of that knowingness which is a characteristic of his race. In England he is a constant mark for the keeper's gun and, though a favourite of mine, it must be admitted rightly, since in common with his tribe—for even when white or pied they are all "tarred with the same brush," —he is a dreadful thief, a rank robber, and a pirate of the worst kind, though, to look at him, you might be tempted to think him always, what he is only sometimes, the farmer's friend. He steals the eggs of fowls as well as of small birds, he kills nestlings, and behaves himself like the China coast pirates used to do, as perfectly honest when there was no chance of being anything else. The story of his nesting skill, and how he once called the other birds together so that they, too, might learn how to put a roof over their heads, is too well known to bear repetition. In return for his sport-spoiling powers he is sometimes called on to provide sport himself. Magpie catching is one of the most exciting kinds of that old-world form of the chase—hawking. Magpies in China are more sociable than those in England, perhaps because there are so many more of them, but they cannot put up with the communism of the rook. The magpie is a strict individualist. No Socialist need hope for welcome in his territory. For years a single pair ruled the British Consular compound and the Public Garden in Shanghai with far more severity than either Consul or Council. No other bird of the kind dared

show a beak east of the Museum Road or south of the Creek. Doves they ignored, and the smaller singing birds, sparrows, etc., were gladly tolerated for the tit-bits they provided.

Common enough in the wooded portions of the Shanghai Settlement as well as in all the country round is a very pretty cousin to the magpie. He is usually called the blue jay by local sportsmen but he is really a magpie bearing the descriptive title of the azure-winged (*Cyanopica cocki*, or *Cyanopolius cyaneus*). He is a very charming bird in many ways. In colour he shows a black, jockey-capped head and for the rest a delightful combination of grey and blue, wings and tail especially showing the azure tint. He lives, and moves and has his being in little parties of eight or ten perhaps, and is never seen far from trees, though a large portion of his food is found on the ground. He is a great chatterer, and it is quite evident that his companions understand every call he gives.

A still more beautiful species of an allied family is the red-billed blue magpie. He is by far the most beautiful of all the magpie family with which we are acquainted in this part of the world. His beak and feet are red: he has a glossy black head and neck, with a crest of speckled white, his belly is white, or whitish grey, his wings blue, and his tail, of which the two central feathers are nearly twice as long as those of the common magpie, is of barred black and white, all so charmingly combined as to make him a vision of supreme delight. I shall never forget my first sight of this beautiful creature in the next province of Chekiang many, many years ago. As Mr. Styan has said of him, he is a noisy bird, fond of letting his friends know where he is—there are always parties of them, a precaution which in wooded districts may be necessary to prevent straying. The nearest district to Shanghai where I personally have met *Urocissa Sinensis*, as he is called, is the country between Kashing and Hangchow. There, in the early 'seventies', there used to be a fairly large stretch of country very sparsely populated, and in some parts quite waste. It had not recovered from the despoilment which it received alternately from the Taipings and their Imperialist foes. It was known to sporting men generally as "The Plain", and there, thanks to the semi-jungle of the neighbourhood, wild life was as plentiful as it was varied. Pheasants by the thousand, partridges, quail, ducks, teal, snipe and woodcock, deer, and almost everything else in the form of shootable beast and bird which Kiangsu provides, were to be found for the search. Possibly it was due to the nature of the country at that time that, once there, one seemed to be in another avian world. Birds were then seen, and I believe are still sometimes, which are rarely, if ever, found in the neighbourhood of the Settlement,

and amongst them was the redbilled magpie of which some account has now been given.

The true jays—genus *Garrulus*—are well known in China though in my own experience uncommon in this neighbourhood. A brown variety, a great chatterer when alarmed, is common enough, but I am not sure whether it is *Garrulax perspicillatus* or some other variety. It is frequently known amongst local sportsmen as the jay thrush, from its size and the general brown of its covering, though there is no speckled breast as in the true thrush. Of the common jay *(G. glandarius)* I have not seen any at all in this neighbourhood except stuffed specimens in the Museum and elsewhere.

Chapter VIII.

SOME SHANGHAI SINGING BIRDS.

Suppose it had happened that in the complexity of Nature's evolution singing birds had been overlooked, or found impossible of development: what a difference it would have made to the enjoyment of man! For though in the pursuit of pleasures far less delightful, far less innocent, and much more costly, many men do at times forget the charms which have been provided for them with so liberal a hand, yet there are very few who are at all times entirely untouched by the melodies of their gardens and the music of the woods. It is said that one of the attractions which act so powerfully on Americans to take them over to their Motherland is the song of the lark. There is so much about it in English poetry, so much enthusiasm, so many raptures, that nothing but the reality heard with one's own ears can satisfy longings so aroused. It was once my pleasure to take an Englishman, born in Shanghai, out into English fields for the first time. The spring was in its prime, and by and by, of course, up went a lark, up and up, till only good eyes could follow its form, and good ears the song which poured from its quivering little throat as from some marvellous pipe in the very heavens themselves. Fortunately my friend was able both to see and hear and, during all the minutes of the celestial solo, he stood spellbound. The utmost height attained, our songster began his gently curved descent. We watched him, and listened, all eyes and ears. At last, when within some 50 or 60 ft. from earth, his wings were closed, and he fell like a stone till within a yard or so of the ground, and then his outspread pinions dropped him like a feather on the sward. There was a deep sigh from my companion which spoke volumes, but all he said was, "I would'nt have missed it for worlds!"

I have headed this chapter "Some Shanghai Singing Birds", but from my own experience I cannot vouch for the actual singing presence of the lark, *(Alauda arvensis)*, close to the Settlement. We have, however, the authority of Mr.

Teesdale and Mr. H. T. Wade for their song by the sea-wall. Would that they were common on the Race-course! David describes five varieties of larks in China and, as has been said before, the skylark itself is one of our most common winter birds. Then, however, there is not that compelling force of love which makes the music of spring and summer. It would be a most interesting undertaking to enquire on the equator into the reason why there are no tropical songsters to compare with our nightingale, lark, thrush, and blackbird. Bird-lovers are by no means at one respecting the comparative excellence of these four rivals. Many declare the nightingale King of all, but those who are as enamoured of the melody of the thrush reply that this is merely because at night the nightingale has the whole concert room to himself and that the surrounding darkness adds mystery as well as beauty. Others again give the first place in their affection to the lark. He alone sings on the wing. I love them all. But I have heard thousands of thrushes for one nightingale, for even in England, *Exythacus Luscinia*, the sweet singer of the gloom, is very local in his habitation. Perhaps London may be said to be the centre of his English habitat. In the north he is unknown. But the thrush is well-nigh ubiquitous. More than a dozen varieties are known in China, but these, too, do not, as a rule, nest in this neighbourhood, and so we miss their song. There are several specimens in the Museum which will amply repay a visit. Our most noticable local representative of the genus *Turdus* is the blackbird, and given shelter enough, he is willing to do his very best to fill the gap. *Turdus Merula*, *Merula Sinensis*, *Merula Mandarina*, the blackbird, black ousel, or merle—those are a few of the names from which his friends may take their choice when they wish—which should be often—to speak of him. I was not a little surprised a few days ago to find that he has enemies outside the army of gardeners and fruit growers. The writer of "Birds of the Norfolk Broads" finds nothing too severe, too cutting, or too abusive to say of him. Only one of his many characteristics is praised—his audacity. But I have a shrewd suspicion that were Mr. Emerson out here he would tell another tale. Instead of a curse he would breathe a blessing: his abuse would turn to praise, his detraction to exultation. For with us the blackbird as a singer has no rival. Mr. Emerson says he is voracious: all birds are voracious: their hotter blood ensures a more rapid digestion than ours, and their one great business is to eat. Did I not the other day make a calculation—which ran into hundredweights, respecting the amount that would be required by a heavy man per day, if he could eat like a snipe? All birds are alike in this respect, why stigmatize *Merula*

Mandarina as gluttonous? He is interesting to watch even when eating—so long as they are not our own strawberries that are disappearing. Even then some people are generous enough to watch and be content. Listen to Tennyson:—

O Blackbird! sing me something well:
While all the neighbours shoot these round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble and dwell.
The espaliers and the standards, all
Are thine: the range of lawn and park,
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

And then the poet goes on to tell of his reward. There is the golden bill to watch, the silver tongue to hear. Yes, even in February. So it is here. Watch a blackbird on the lawn. What a picture he is. Much of his daintiness is due to his immaculate form. But his pure black, glossy and smooth, is such a setting as never was for the gold of his bill. In the early morning, just as the first streaks of dawn lighten the east he is awake and then song is his first thought. I suppose Madame Merula delights in it. It is certainly for her benefit that its outpourings are so full and rich. Varied, too, are they: more so than is the case in England. With bedroom windows wide open, it is one of the pleasures of Shanghai life to lie and listen.

White blackbirds, that is to say, albinos, are not uncommon, and the hen bird here is sometimes so brown as to suggest that crosses between *Merula Mandarina* and *Merula Gouldi* may have occurred once upon a time, though the latter, a fine chocolate and golden brown bird is now found more to the west of us. Space forbids to tell of the blackbird's audacity, though many instances might be given. How it nests, too, is another story, for there are one or two other songsters yet to be named.

The *Hwamei*, or the bird of the "Flowery Eyebrows," in Chinese, is classically known as *Turdus Sinensis* or as *Leucodioptron Sinense*. The only place where I have actually come across them familiarly is at the Hills. There, especially on one particular hill, I have heard them repeatedly. Once I saw a pair in a garden in the very centre of the Settlement. Personally there is something in the music of Hwamei which detracts from perfect enjoyment of it, but it cannot be denied that the song is at once powerful and varied. It is also in parts very sweet. The Chinese are very fond of it as a cage bird, as they are also of the lark. They may be seen at the proper season with the rival birds in cages placed near, but out of sight of each other, a cloth covering being used for this purpose. Rivalry then ensures the very best the birds are capable of, their masters standing by and

nodding with appreciative smiles as their pets strive their hardest to outdo each other. Another bird not uncommonly caged is the myna, or grackle, an Asiatic variety of the starling family. It cannot be claimed that they excel as songsters, but their pleasant chatter, especially on sunny afternoons in winter, when a little band of them hold converse, is quite pleasant to hear. Then there is the local representative of the hawfinch, a wonderfully pretty bird, who just now is exhibiting to the full the effect of his little pipe. His plumage, however, is prettier than his song. The local bulbul, so far as I am aware is never taught to talk, and yet his song is more articulate than that of any birds I know. It is quite an easy matter to set even English words to what he says, and I am inclined to think that any one well versed in the more tone-filled dialects of China could make up quite a string of sentences uttered by this interesting little bird. The bulbul is always with us, but, as usual, he is most talkative in spring. Other "songsters of the grove" there are, but enough have been mentioned to show that though Shanghai cannot boast a choir like that of England, her gardens and woods are neither dismal nor dumb.

Chapter IX.

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNS.

Most of the birds hitherto described in these papers have been well known either in connexion with sport, or because of their intimate association with man in his fields or near his dwelling. At present the class now under consideration can offer no such claims. The days have long since gone by when herons were strictly preserved in England for hawking, and a fine of a pound sterling was inflicted for killing one otherwise. There are still, however, some 300 heronries in the British Isles, and at least one, in Kent, which is 600 years old. *Ardea Cinerea*, as the common heron is technically known, is a well known bird to country folk in England. There is a good specimen in the Shanghai Museum. At his best he stands about 3ft. high, whilst, fully spread, his wings have a stretch of 6ft. But he is, after all, little but legs and arms, and weighs not more than about 4 lb. He has been known, however, to dispose of 50 fish in a day, some of them more than nine inches long. Some of his persecutors know of his power of storage in this particular, and when he is lazily flapping his great wings homeward they sometimes give chase and annoy him till he disgorges one fish after another upon which they in turn feed. Standing in the open, as the heron may frequently be seen in China, he looks like a sentinel on guard. Not a motion of head, body, or feathers can one see, if he is intent on fishing. But all of a sudden, perhaps, the bent-back head is shot forward and downward, the curved neck straightens and lengthens apparently, and the next thing seen is the head withdrawn with a fish between mandibles. If an eel, it is sometimes thrown out on dry land where a thrust or two of the terrible beak effectually stops its wriggling. There is nothing showy about the heron. Like so many waders he has a good deal of white on the under parts, but there is a very neat black and white tie fitting his long shapely neck, blacktopped head lightened with a white feather or two, black primaries in his wings, and for the rest, a very unassuming assortment of greys and slaty blue.

Nobody thinks of shooting herons in China, except an occasional specimen for scientific purposes or stuffing. I experimented on one once for the table, and found it, as I have found other fish-eating birds, quite palatable when curried after a sufficiently long hanging. Should any sportsman bring down a winged heron, he would be well advised to be careful in his approach to it. The heron's beak is a weapon to be respected. Even a game cock is no match for its owner, and as it has a peculiar propensity for making lightning darts at the eyes, it should be carefully watched.

As a rule the heron likes a high nesting-place, but instances have been known of heron's nests on piles of floating rushes, and even on the ground. A good many years ago I came upon a heronry in China during the breeding seaon. I have used the word "heronry" though as a matter of fact there were only egrets in it. There were perhaps a hundred nests all told, and I took advantage of the opportunity to examine a little into the domestic arrangements of the egret tribe. The nests are mere platforms of sticks, bigger and clumsier than those of the rook, and not very much hollowed. The eggs have a very pure tinge of green, and at the time I was there, there were as yet no young hatched out. The leafy cover was thick, and after climbing well up and getting well under it there was a good opportunity for looking down into several nests, Mrs. *Ardea Garzetta*, with her pure bridal white, not being at home. By and by she returned with her lord and master, he who is possessed of those so-called "osprey plumes" for which he is so persecuted. At first they did not see me, and I had an excellent opportunity of watching them at close quarters. There were others also, of the yellow plumed variety, no less beautiful. When at last they detected the intruder there was a terrible commotion. Whatever stands in egret tongue for "Fire, murder, stop thief, police!" and the like was instantly clamoured forth and repeated by every member of the community within hearing. Great was the commotion. Nor did it cease till I had descended and left the wood. It gave me an excellent opportunity, however, for noting habits and peculiarities.

What was most striking about it all was the immaculate purity of the plumage both of males and females. The male, of course, is the only one to wear the plumes, and he only during the breeding season, and it was impossible to refrain from a consideration of the penalty which should be inflicted on all those who for fashion's sake do these beautiful creatures to death when Nature most wishes them to live. Women know the truth of the matter. It has been published again and again till ignorance can no longer be a plea. For such as encourage the destruction of these birds, therefore,

should be re-introduced the old punishment of the ducking-stool, seated in which, feathers, plumes and all, the peccant dame should be made acquainted with five feet of water in the nearest and dirtiest horsepond. The merchant who buys from the collectors should be laid by the heels, or, rather, placed on the treadmill for six months, whilst the actual collector would be getting no more than his deserts if he were shot with as little compunction as he shoots the victims.

There are three or four varieties of the egret family in China, but as authorities cannot agree as to their classic names it may be as well to omit these altogether. Besides the two kinds already mentioned there are two more to be frequently met in the paddy fields during summer. They both have a more or less ruddy buff colour on the head and back, and are quite handsome birds. They may often be seen sailing over the Shanghai Settlement.

Another kind, the little green heron, is smaller than any of the foregoing, standing only some ten inches or so in height. Some of these will at times nest in the trees of Shanghai gardens if unmolested. A pair might have been seen almost any summer evening towards dusk fishing, or frog-catching, in the creeks round the race-course three or four summers ago.

For bitterns I advise all interested in birds who have not already done so to go to the Museum, where they will find some well preserved specimens. A very remarkable bird is the bitten, *Botaurus Stellaris*. He is a night feeder, a dweller in swamps and marshes, skulker midst long grass, rushes, and reeds, whence he emerges only when forced by Nature or the sportsman's dog. How well he is adapted for his life will be seen in a moment. His buff colour would secure his being unnoticed in dried reeds or other growth, whilst the black markings are the exact counterpart of the dark shadows between stems. They are on a par with the stripes of the tiger which, as every Anglo-Indian knows, enable that royal gentleman simply to vanish as soon as he comes to the jungle. At his full height the bittern stands about 30 inches. But he has cousins which are considerably smaller than that, and which are, I think, far more common in this neighbourhood than he. No reference to the bittern could be complete which did not speak of his boom. All sorts of curious explanations have been offered respecting this strange sound. But the truth appears to be that as it is never heard but in the breeding season it must be referred to that instinct which leads most males of avian nature to seek to charm their respective mates by the elegant persuasiveness of song. We have noted the efforts of the lark, the nightingale, the thrush, and the blackbird in this connexion. The boom of the bittern

merely adds to the orchestral effect. Nature evidently meant the bittern to play the big drum. At any rate we hear him "booming from his sedge shallow" as though he, at least, believes that his good lady liked to listen.

Bitterns nest on the ground, and lay four eggs so tinted that they, too, are as little likely to be seen as their parent. Except when migrating and well under way the bitterns are slow and awkward flyers, flapping clumsily along with neck outstretched and legs dangling, as though that was the last thing they really enjoyed: and so indeed it would seem, for they do not rise until forced, trusting, as a quail or a bamboo partridge will do, to protective covering for effective concealment. Generally too, their confidence is well-founded, for the number of bitterns put up is as a rule remarkably small.

Chapter X.

CUCKOOS.

"O blithe new-comer!" is Wordsworth's apostrophe to the Cuckoo. And then he proceeds in charmingly true and simple verse to characterize the harbinger of spring" in his more striking traits. There is first of all the fact that one hears the cuckoo a thousand times, perhaps, without seeing him:

> O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird.
> Or but a wandering voice?

And the decision come to is:

> No bird, but an invisible thing.
> A voice, a mystery.
> To seek thee did I often rove
> Through woods and on the green,
> And still thou wert a hope, a love:
> Still longed for, never seen.

All this is as true of the Chinese cuckoo as of that of British woods and fields. Cuckoos are, at their proper season, plentiful in almost all lands. The common cuckoo, *(Cuculus Canorus)* is found as nearly all over Asia as it is all over Europe. David describes six species. In the neighbourhood of Shanghai he is not so abundant as his cousin *(Cuculus Striatus)*, whose cry, instead of being one of two syllables, more often contains four, and sounds more like "Kwer-kwer-kwer-kwo" than the familiar "Koo-koo." There is another difference, too, in habits. So far as I can remember, the common cuckoo in England keeps good hours and goes to sleep with the sun as well-behaved diurnal birds should. But the local bird is up at all hours of the night during the warmer weeks he is here, and may be heard with his fourfold cry almost as often at midnight as at mid-day.

What is it, besides its connexion with spring, that has made the cuckoo such an object of interest? There are several reasons at which we must glance in due course. First and foremost, doubtless, is the fact that it is one of the few birds

which build no nest and do nothing for the support of their own young. This is, indeed, a wonderfully strange trait, though one which lack of space prevents our discussing. Everybody knows that the cuckoo abandons its young to foster-parents. The female lays her egg on the ground, and then taking it in her mouth deposits it in the nest of any suitable bird, usually, it is belived, in the nest of the same kind as she herself was hatched in, for her eggs approach, in colour and size, those of her foster-mother. These things are none the less marvellous for being true. Hedge-sparrows, wag-tails, yellow-hammers, and some others are most frequently patronized. I have seen young cuckoos in the nests of hedge-sparrows and wag-tails, and once, though I have not seen such a fact recorded in any book, I found one in the nest of a robin.

What happens when the young are hatched is known with great accuracy. The young cuckoo proceeds, before its eyes are open, to eject all its companions, be they young birds or unhatched eggs. To aid in this diabolical operation there is a curious hollow in the back into which its companions are gradually worked and then shouldered over the edge of the nest to die beneath! This hollow fills up in twelve days, but ere that is past the young cuckoo is "monarch of all he surveys." His are all the tit-bits which a pair of very assiduous foster-parents can bring, and the consequence is that he grows at a prodigious rate, and soon surpasses in size the tiny foster robin, or wagtail. Long before it is fully fledged, however, its own parents have returned to warmer climes. An old rhyme, speaking not very correctly, says of the cuckoo, "In June, he alters his tune: In July he prepares to fly. And in August, go he must." As a matter of fact the adults usually leave about the end of the first week in July. A strange thing respecting them is that males are far more numerous than females. There is no pairing therefore, for the females are polyandrous, as may be observed frequently by those who watch. It is the male which has the familiar cry. The sexual call of the female is a gurgle, not loud, but perfectly effective for its purpose.

The cuckoo is the first bird yet to come before us which has not the common arrangement of toes, three in front and one behind. He, on the contrary, has the picarian foot, like that of the woodpeckers, with two toes before and two behind. Cuckoos love to take their stand on some prominent object, and may be seen in considerable numbers on the telegraph wires and posts along the Siberian railway, about the beginning of June. The first I heard in Shanghai this season was on the sixth of May, about eight o'clock in the morning. Since then the wooded gardens in the Western district have echoed their cries continually.

Another old world belief which gave rise to a great deal of interest in the cuckoo was that in winter it turned into a sparow-hawk. In days when men trusted their eyes without the least question, there was some excuse for this belief, for in colour, shape, size, and flight there is so close a resemblance that it is said even the very birds are deceived. It is quite true that they do mob the cuckoo as they will a sparrow-hawk, but whether for the same reason I venture to entertain some skepticism. For it is certain enough that great as is the resemblance between the hawk and the cuckoo, no country-bred boy would be deceived twice. His practised eye would note the difference, particularly in length of bill: and though the barred breast and under feathers are nearly identical in the two as are the length of wing, tail, and the colouring generally, there is enough variety on which an expert may decide. I am more inclined to believe that the little birds instinctively recognize in the cuckoo an enemy of sorts, though not carnivorous. There are, however, even modern books which perpetuate the belief in the raptorial tendencies of the cuckoo. A translation of a French work now in my possession has an illustration of a cuckoo in the act of killing a golden-crested wren! One has already been massacred, a second is being held in the claw on a branch, and a third, which is venturing to remonstrate, is being threatened in look and tone. As, however, this particular cuckoo seems to be drawn with three toes in front, it is not necessary to go further into the matter. Another work I have tells of a number of cuckoos attacking a late brood of blackbirds. "They were seen to tear them to pieces, the gardener actually rescuing one from their grasp. Not above three or four robbers were heard to cry 'Cuckoo,' and then in a sort of hoarse unnatural tone." Quite so. Possibly these were sparrow-hawks. This book is dated 1864. But there is no hint in really modern books that I have seen at any marauding nature of this sort. The cuckoo lives mainly on caterpillars, and its beak is not of raptorial form.

Very difficult questions besides these are suggested by the natural history of the cuckoo. How did the parasitic habit begin in the first place? Doubtless some advantage was to be derived from it, but that merely shifts the difficulty from one point to another. How does it happen that the egg of so large a bird should be of so small a size as to effectally deceive those in whose nest it may be placed? Still more strange, how comes it that the cuckoo's egg placed in the hedge-sparrow's nest is like the hedge-sparrow's egg, whilst that in the nest of the wag-tail is like that of the wagtail? We have to confess ourselves completely nonplussed before such questions as these. Further care and observation may by and by throw light on such matters, but at present we are in

the dark. Then again, the migratory mystery arises. The parent birds have gone in July. The young remain till late in August, or September. I shot one once in this province in October. How do they know that they have to go south? Who informs them. How do they know which way to go? The answer usually lies in that blessed word "Instinct," which in this case is synonymous with "Human Ignorance." Once more, we cannot tell. Once again, we have to acknowledge ourselves in the presence of a mystery. It stimulates our interest immensely, and perhaps by and by there will be no mystery at all. Nature will have given up the secret she has so jealously guarded all this time, but till she does this man's interest in the cuckoo will continue. He may be the most immoral, the most unfeeling and in many ways the most unworthy of our respect, but till we have unravelled his secret he is sure of our regard.

Chapter XI.

NESTS AND NESTLINGS.

It is impossible at this time of the year for the naturalist to avoid having his attention diverted to some extent from birds to their nests. Nor would he wish it otherwise. For next to the living creature itself there are few things more interesting than a bird's nest.

"Mark it well, within, without:
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No bodkin to insert, no glue to join,
His little beak was all—and yet
How nicely finished."

I am quoting these lines from memory, and I am afraid incorrectly, but they contain the gist of a meaning which the bird-lover cannot mistake. Some nests, of course, are the roughest of the rough. Nature adapts means to the ends. A pheasant knowing that her little brood will run about with bits of shell sticking to their backs, and never see their birthplace again, does not waste time and trouble in the construction of such an elaborate home as that of the magpie. I have put a hen pheasant off her nest right out in the open in a Chinese ploughed field. She had scooped a little hollow, and scratched together a few bits of dried grass. At the other end of the scale is the elaborate nest of the weaver bird, and between the two extremes all sorts and conditions of fibrous, woolly, clayey and other structures.

It was once my good fortune to see the building of a Chinese blackbird's nest *(Merula Mandarina)* from the very foundation. Convalescent at the time, my waking hours were being spent on a long chair on the verandah. With great good fortune, for me, a hen blackbird chose that period to build her nest within about six yards' distance. An Englishman who has never left his own country would at once jump to the conclusion that I was on the ground floor and near a hedge, for the English blackbird rarely, if ever, chooses any site for nesting that is not in bush or on the dry side of a bank out of which a hedge grows. But as we have few bushes and no hedges to speak of in China, the blackbird nests on trees and adapts itself to the differing conditions. In this case an

almost horizontal branch was selected at the spot where there was a bifurcation, as there is where two of our fingers spring from the body of the hand. Now, as the blackbird's nest is of the shape of a finger-bowl, and as China winds are sometimes extremely violent, it is plain that such nests would, if they were formed exactly like the nests in England, be very liable to be blown away. But here comes in that natural adaptability which has already been mentioned. Madame Merula in this case laid a foundation of wet mud, probably selected for its special adhesiveness. This she pressed down into the roughnesses of the bark with her breast and wings, getting into a dreadfully dirty state by so doing. Her next move was to bring long strips of fibrous material, grass, straw, and what not. These were likewise pressed into the foundation before that had time to dry. Then more and more of mud and fibre. All this was foundation. And whilst it dries, gentle reader, and mayhap modern engineer, will you be good enough to tell me the difference in principle between this work of the blackbird and that which you are now priding yourself upon, and which the world is acclaiming as something quite new and wonderful—reinforced concrete! I could not do so myself. All that I know about it is what I have told you, and this besides, that the nest was finished, that it stood the test of more than one half gale, and that the family of four were duly hatched and brought up. Just now, I could tell you where there are two others, one in a similar position, the other in a more cupshaped fork. Once they give their confidence, blackbirds give it freely and completely. One of the present year nests is within a few feet of the heads of hundreds of passers-by every day. I know of a hawfinch's nest in an exactly similar position. "Country Life" the other day gave a photograph of a hen blackbird getting on her nest next to a clock on a mantlepiece. She had been tamed, but had the freedom of the neighbourhood to do as she chose.

Doves, too, in Shanghai, now that they have become accustomed to being left alone, will nest in places where passengers might almost touch them, and it is strange how thousands of people go by, day after day, and are so blind as not to see what is within reach. The dove makes no pretence of building anything elaborate. She never has more than two young at a time, often only one, and as these are as quiet and sedate in manner as those of the pheasant and partridge are the reverse, she need be under no alarm for fear they will fall out. In the south of England the country people used to read into the dove's song these words:—

Coo-coo: Coo-coo:
Put two sticks across,
And that'll do:

which, of course had reference to the slightness of the framework of her nest.

Of absolutely solid structure in nests one of the best examples is that of the house martin or of the swallow. Many a house in China may be seen with its little wooden platform near the ceiling, placed there on purpose to form the basis of a martin's nest, the birds belonging to the family as much as the children do. Very pretty, and highly suggestive of the gentler side of Chinese nature, is this. The nest of the edible swallow, as we sometimes find the edible nest of *Collocalia fuciphaga* referred to, is formed mainly of gelatinous matter in the form of a very small and shallow saucer, but so far as I know these are all tropical.

But the man who hopes to make himself acquainted with all the varieties and variations in nest formation has a life's task. We can but glance at a few. Our local bulbul, for example, shows us that the selection of material is a matter of great importance to some birds. Nothing but the fibres of our ordinary fan palm, those fibres which the Chinese sometimes use for rain coats, will satisfy her fastidious taste. No straw, no leaves, nothing but this brown coloured fibrous matter, frequently chosen doubtless to render the nest inconspicuous on the background selected for it. Another, in a different position, had similar fine kind of fibre, but of a lighter colour, and made of ordinary vegetable matter. The shrike takes rougher material for the outside, but likes something softer within. One of the reed-warblers builds its nest entirely of the long leaves of reeds wound round and round and in and out, the interior being very comfortable indeed. The long-tailed tit makes perhaps the most delicate structure of all our ordinary birds. It is a round mass of soft woolly fibres, shaped like that of the English wren, with a hole for entrance high up on one side. In not a few cases the outside is covered more or less with bits of rock lichen, light in colour. The tailor-bird actually sews leaves together to form a pendent receptacle in which the cosiest of homes is made for the little *Sylvia sutorius*. There is a specimen nest in the Shanghai Museum, but that is probably from the far south, perhaps from India. There is also a beautifully made nest of a weaver-bird, probably from Africa.

But our own gardens will supply a nest only one or two degrees less interesting than these, the nest of the golden oriole, for whilst the great majority of nests have a foundation more or less solid, the oriole frequently dispenses with the foundation altogether and hangs its nest to a branch, or more often, two or three close together. For a bird this arrangement is highly ingenious. Naturally the material required differs widely from that needed for nests with a

solid support below. And this is the reason why the oriole may be seen diligently searching amongst the trees for fibrous matter which will bear the strain. Once found, its strength is tested fibre by fibre, for none is picked off the ground apparently, but is tugged off from the bark of such trees as the Chinese plane. I have watched a pair busy at this work, and coming back again and again to a spot where evidently they had discovered exactly what they required. Hard work it was, too. With this fibrous material the pendent nest is formed. The oriole is a sort of cousin, more than once removed, of the thrush and blackbird, and being of about the same size makes a nest of roughly the same capacity. The shape too is the same, but its pendent condition and fibrous nature make a wide difference.

A few birds nest in the earth. Here and there a member of the duck family will deposit her eggs in the burrow of a rabbit or some such animal. The burrowing owls of America share their burrows with rattlesnakes; the sand-martin scoops out for itself a hole in the perpendicular side of a sandy bank, but we have none of these in our immediate neighbourhood. The ordinary kingfishers are our most common ground-nesting birds, with perhaps one or two other species which visit us in the breeding season. These make use of a hole in the bank of a creek or brook, and droppings sometimes tell of its whereabouts, which might not otherwise be discovered. In the very complete collection of nests at South Kensington there is about a cubic yard of solid earth taken from the ground and placed in a glass case. On one side is the entrance to a kingfisher's nest, and on the other side the extreme back of the hole is seen showing the nest itself.

Just now, fledged nestlings are to be frequently met with in the country. Young magpies, rooks, blackbirds, and others are being given their final lessons in self-support. One trait they have which is very human. They know better than their parents. Three or four times lately a brood of young blackbirds have allowed me to come within easy killing distance had I been murderously inclined, and that notwithstanding all that their mother and father were saying. These were flying round in a great state of excitement. "Fly, Oh fly," they were screaming, "here's one of the ogres that will eat you up. Fly, Oh fly! you'll be killed! Fly, Oh fly!!" And then, as the youngsters refused to budge, though they were quite capable of flying well enough, the old birds would do their utmost to attract attention from their self-willed offspring, who, judging from their actions were evidently saying to themselves, "There they are again, those foolish parents of ours. Why will they keep on doing these things? No harm has ever come to us yet and we don't believe it ever

will. Anyhow we'll wait and see!" And they did wait, so long that they might have been shot or even knocked down with a stone. But youth is always cocksure. On the other hand man's behaviour is, alas! rightly measured by the dread his presence evokes. Not altogether flattering to us, is it? I find myself, in this connexion, placed on exactly the same level as a cat!

Chapter XII.

FLYCATCHERS.

If there is any family of birds which specially belongs to the summer it must be acknowledged to be that family which depends entirely on flies and other insects of the kind for food. My earliest recollections of birds are largely filled with a little brown-backed, breast-speckled thing, which loved a stooping branch of an apple tree in the orchard, and year by year built in a hole in the stable wall. Coming only when the weather had really set in warm, somewhere about the end of May, he was always to be found somewhere close by, no swallow truer to the old home. It is with little less pleasure one finds his representative in China.

Muscicapa grisecla, the grey or common flycatcher, he is usually called. There is no show about him. Built strictly for "business", all frippery seems alien to his nature. He loves the neighbourhood of trees, and it is usually in or near their shade that his stand is taken. I have been watching one recently. A little glade affords him his most-loved hunting-place, and when there he is the avian embodiment of alertness. If generals could instil into scouts, vedettes, and sentries a tithe of the watchfulness which he shows there could be no such thing as surprise in war. Nothing escapes the watchful eye of the flycatcher, and woe betide any unlucky fly that buzzes into his immediate neighbourhood. A lightning glance of the eye, an equally rapid turn of the body, if that be necessary, a dart through the air, a snap of the mandibles as if a small steel-trap had come to, and the few short hours of the poor fly are ended. The grey flycatcher has one trait, which he shares with the kingfisher, his tolerance of the presence of man when watching for his prey. Most birds have a strong dislike to being watched. If you want to see what they are doing, and they know you are there, you must pretend to be occupied in watching something else at a distance, and then you can attain the object of your desire, only out of the corner of your eye. Then neither birds nor rabbits seem to mind. But "We hate being stared at", might be as common a saying in bird-language as it is amongst ourselves. To the flycatcher, if there should happen to be a cold spell after he has arrived, man is sometimes extremely useful, for by his

movements amongst the garden plants or the grass and trees of the orchard, he may disturb the torpid flies and so provide the catcher with a dinner. For the common flycatcher, be it remembered, is a thorough sport. Like his bigger hunting friends, the eagles and falcons, he scorns to take any food except on the wing. Many other insect-eating birds will hunt round amongst the grass, the bark of trees, or other hiding places for their prey. *M. Griseola* is above that. "On the wing, or not at all" is equally his and the swallow's motto.

The pied flycatcher is rare in England, and is, I think, equally so in China. I have never seen one. The most attractive of the flycatchers with which I am acquainted, in this part of the world, is best known by his English name, Ince's Paradise flycatcher. Authorities differ as to his classical title, some calling him *Tchitrea Incei*, others *Terpsiphone Paradisi*. The very word "Paradise" suggests something out of the common in the way of adornment, and the bird we have now under notice has it. His head is of a dark cobalt blue, with a kind of metallic lustre which in certain lights turns to a green tinge. He has a crest of feathers, not very pronounced, but quite an ornament when seen at their best. Then comes a peculiarity: the rest of his body may be either mainly white or mainly a very warm chocolate so ruddy as to shine in the sun and make of him a very conspicuous object indeed when in full view. If white, there are black feathers here and there by way of contrast. The female has the same blue head, but her body is always of the ruddy chocolate hue. There is a marked difference, however, between her tail and that of her lord. Hers is comparatively short; his, in addition to the feathers found in hers, has two central feathers which trail behind to a length of perhaps ten or twelve inches. There is no stiffness about them. They are, as a matter of fact, quite slender and drooping, and their passage through the air shows a quivering waviness that might be expected under such circumstances. I am careful to note this, because in an old book of birds in my possession there is an engraving of the Paradise flycatcher which presents the two long feathers as if they were stiff as wires and capable of standing out in a perfectly straight line for their entire length. We owe a debt to those old engravers which, luckily for them, we can never pay. The audacity they must have possessed would have been of the utmost value used in a good cause but, when employed to disseminate imaginary impressions utterly false to nature and to fact, the result has not been happy. We may place in the same category the artist who drew the Paradise flycatcher with the wiry tail and him who filled the native city of Shanghai with hills and mountains.

Half an hour's watching of the Ince bird will suffice to prove that its tail, in keeping with the rest of its body, is a miracle of lightness. There are a good many of these birds nowadays in the Shanghai gardens of the western district, and in the country, wherever there is tree-cover enough, they may be seen. Indeed they have an extremely wide range, some occasionally getting into England. They are keen hunters. Sometimes they take their prey in the air, but at other times are not above picking a fly off the bark of a tree or pursuing it amongst the leafy branches. For this reason they care less for an open space than the common flycatcher does, although for them, too, a too-thick cover is useless. The reader who wishes to make the acquaintance of this fairy-like little creature should find a neighbourhood where trees are plentiful. Bamboos will do, as at the hills. And then, having the good fortune to discover a rendezvous, get quietly under cover and watch. He will be amply rewarded for the time spent. For his surroundings of themselves are delightful—the freshness of the new-clad woods, the brightness of the sun, the sense of growing life everywhere discernible, are in themselves charms to lighten gloom itself. Then the birds come, not merely those we are looking for, but many others, one after another in ceaseless succession, some curious at the strange presence they detect, and willing to make his closer acquaintance if he will but be still, others resentful of the intrusion, and desirous by warning cries to give notice to all within call to look out. When our flycatchers do come, we are naturally all eyes. How light they are! We have never seen one weighed, but we should think that one or two ounces at the most would be shown on the scale, and so we understand how it is that the male bird in particular seems rather to flit than to fly. Not but what he can dart rapidly enough on his prey when necessary, but in general his movements are of rather a fluttering nature. If in his white plumage he is far more easily marked, but he is not more beautiful than in the ruddy chestnut. In and out of the bamboos and tree trunks he goes, a thing of joy in life, and of delight to the beholder. We want to know a good deal more about his strange change of colour, for it is certain that there are both white and chestunt males that are equally mature. David tells of a long protracted fight between two such, which ended in a victory for the white. We will not think of dogmatizing on the matter, therefore, but will wait patiently for further knowledge.

Another beautiful little bird of the flycatcher tribe is sometimes known as the Narcissus flycatcher. He is about the size of a robin, but is clad in a gorgeous robe of black and gold, the yellow predominating. Whether or no he is

the same as is described by David under the title *Xanthopygia Narcissus*, I cannot say, but I am inclined to think that the two are distinct. *Xanthopygia* has more black about it than a golden oriole, whilst the bird which I understand to be the Narcissus is far more purely yellow. They are, however, of about the same size, and as *Xanthopygia* is confined in this part of the world to the coast districts, it may be that they are mere varieties of the same species, or the same bird in different suits. In either case there are few things in nature which dare claim a greater daintiness. Another claimant to admiration may perhaps be mentioned here, a little bird of an allied group, *Erythrosterna albicilla*, a robin-like little fellow who, though not a fly-falcon like the grey flycatcher is still a hunter of insects. I have seen him but once this year in Shanghai. In form he looks so much like the English robin as to lead the uninitiated to dub him robin at once. The recognition is helped by a dash of red and orange on the upper chest and throat, and altogether the little fellow is a most interesting addition to our gardens. But apparently he is shy, and not very common. On the one occasion when I saw him, I was fortunately in possession of a binocular, and so studied him thoroughly without his feeling alarmed. Like his Paradise cousin he searches the branches and twigs if he does not succeed in his winged attack. Possibly during the summer there may be opportunities of making his closer acquaintance. It may be, however, that he was merely passing through on his way farther north. Then the most we can hope for is a glimpse of him when he goes back again. In size and shape he is a reproduction of the winter robin blue-tail.

Chapter XIII.

THE KINGFISHERS.

Those past-masters in the art of beautiful literary invention, the ancient Greeks, could not fail to seize upon so radiant a creation as the kingfisher to make of it the inspiration of a charming romance. It is to this exceptional readiness of theirs to grasp the essentials of beauty that we are indebted for all those marvellous myths which have come down to us as a never-ending legacy of symmetry and joy. The story of Alcyone or Halcyone and Ceyx is one of these. Ceyx, the husband, is drowned when on his way to consult an oracle. Halcyone, informed by the gods of his fate, throws herself into the sea. Such affection is rewarded by a reincarnation in the form of a pair of Halcyons or kingfishers. Then the story proceeds, with a blissful ignorance of the true facts of natural history, to tell how the halcyons made their nest on the water during the seven days before the winter solstice and the seven after, how during that time, owing to the intervention of the higher powers, there ruled the "Halcyon days," the *dies halcyonii*, during which the birds could hatch out their floating young in perfect safety. That the kingfisher nests in the ground, that it nests in the spring, and it has nothing whatever to do with calm weather may affect our faith in the exactitude of the old Greek writers, but does not lesson our appreciation of their literary charm. And besides, there are halcyon days still in store.

Let us take a summer evening's walk anywhere into the country from Shanghai, away from "the madding crowd." There along the quiet banks of one or other of the creeks we are sure to come upon the common kingfisher, *Alcedo Bengalensis*, as some writers call him, *Alcedo Ispida* as he is more generally known in Europe. The first sign of his presence will probably come from his sharp little cry as he starts from some twig on which within a few feet of the would-be observer he had sat unseen. That little fact marks the wonderful manner in which Nature has arranged that her most gorgeous colours shall so mingle with their surroundings as to be unnoticed. But having seen our little friend go, we may, perhaps, see him alight again, and then if our tactics are those of an old campaigner, there should be little diffi-

culty in getting close enough to have a good view, especially if the pocket carries a handy little binocular. The kingfisher is very willing to be friendly. The Chinese catch him for the sake of certain feathers with which they adorn some of their most lovely jewellery, but they have the conscience to let him go again after their rape of the painted plumes. So there he sits. If possible, you should take up such a position as will command the surface of the water he is watching. Then patience is usually rewarded by the sight of a dive, quite out of sight under the water, and an emergence with a little fish wriggling transversely in the beak. The finny prey, if small, is usually turned into position without more ado, and disappears head first into its living tomb. Sometimes a whack or two on the branch are the preliminaries. Some observers declare that the kingfisher "not unfrequently" misses his aim. This may be so where water is running rapidly, but my experience on Chinese creeks is different. I have never yet seen a miss, though I have seen many successes.

But the most delightful of all ways of watching the kingfisher is to get into a small punt or canoe which you manage alone. Paddle along the creeks in the neighbourhood of the Hills for instance, and as a setting for your bird studies there will be found enough natural beauty to saturate the most receptive worshipper. You may then sit within a few feet of the little fisherman whom the French admire under the name *Martin-pêcheur*. You may scan over all the chromatic notes in his lovely livery: the greenish blue of his little crown, with its border of dusky black: the brilliant back which makes of him a streak of cobalt blue as he darts through the air; the bit of rufous orange near the eye and ear; the light-blue cheeks barred with black; and when he hops round as he will do at times, the buff-white throat with a patch of blue-green on the upper breast, and all the rest of the under surface a rich reddish-orange. You must see all this in life, and at close quarters, if you wish to drink to the full the beauty of almost miraculous admixture of cerulean aquamarine erubescence.

You may go to the R. A. S. Museum. There are kingfishers there, a fairly wide collection. But do not hope for the full radiance I have just described. If you do, disappointment is certain and, what affects me more, very probable doubt of my veracity. Kingfishers, in common with most, probably all, birds, lose their radiance very soon after life is gone—an excellent reason for not killing them unless with strong reason. But a visit to the Museum will at least do something to open the eyes of the bird-lover to the varieties of kingfishers found in China. There is a very faded specimen of the ruddy kingfisher, from Shaweishan. He is about the size

of a bulbul or a small thrush, and so considerably bigger than his little common cousin. There is the still bigger black-capped kingfisher *(Halcyon Pileatus.)* His back is of a much darker blue than most. Near him is a white-breasted specimen from Fukien. which province would seem to be a very Paradise of varying species. His back is light blue, but he has much more of a ruddy colour than the rest. Technically, he is known as *H. Smyrnensis.* Of the *Ceryle* branch of the genus there are the eastern pied kingfisher, a specimen coming from Fukien, and the great spotted kingfisher, with its fine crest, shot near Maychee. This is a really magnificent bird, albeit its colouring is confined almost entirely to black, white, and grey. The Great Artist is ever capable of the most striking and harmonious combinations of the simplest elements. I have seen *Ceryle Lugubris,* as this species is called, along the banks of streams amongst the mountains of the province of Chekiang. When the reader, familiar only with our tiny little creek frequenter, is told that this great spotted bird is as big as a well-grown rook and has a bill in proportion he will be prepared for a kingfisher which otherwise might surprise him. The pied variety, also, I think I have seen during travels in Chekiang, but cannot speak with certainty.

There are other birds of kingfisher type which visit this neighbourhood. As recently as last Easter (1910) during a short holiday at the Hills I saw one quite new to me. It was about the size of the white-breasted variety, say roughly that of a small dove. On its first appearance it suprised me by hovering for a moment over a paddy field in course of preparation for rice, and then making a dart down on something on the bank lying between two fields. Thence it returned to the branch of an adjoining tree, whence it soon disappeared, not to be seen again till next day, when it darted past with all the speed, and a part of the green streak, of *Alcedo Ispida.* So far as could be made out, its colours were a dark cap on the head, a white throat, a coral-red beak, a back of the greenish-blue so well known, though perhaps a shade darker, and a rufous tinge covering the lower part of the breast and the ventral quarters. But the distinctive marking, that which makes of the bird a complete stranger to me so far, were splashes of white on the upper side of the dark-blue wings, not unlike those of the myna. Altogether the bird is of considerable beauty, and it is to be hoped that ere long there may be a specimen in the Museum for purposes of study. Its behaviour over the paddy field, together with what was seen of it over the creeks, would seem to mark the new-comer as one of those which do not confine themselves entirely to a fish diet.

Our little kingfisher probably eats little else than fish. But his relatives are not so purely piscine in diet. Some indulge in crabs, some in frogs, some almost entirely in insect food, whilst occasionally one kind at least has been proved guilty of rank rapacity comparable with that of the birds of prey. It has been seen to visit the nest of a myna and to gobble up at least one of the nestlings! *Martin pêcheur* therefore has reason to blush for some of his kind.

The kingfishers vary even to the extent of having a different number of toes, the Australian Alcyones having but three all told. These pedal arrangements may be classed thus: those with two toes in front and one behind: and the others, some with two in front and two behind as in the climbers, others with the more common arragement, three in front and one behind. Of the Australian kinds that best known by repute in other portions of the world is the laughing jackass. He is a bird of something like a foot and a half in total length, with a wing of over eight, and a tail of over six inches. He has much of the greenish blue of his kind, but is otherwise coloured more largely with brown.

Mention has been made in another place of the nesting habit of the common kingfisher, but it should be remembered that the family in this respect is by no means accustomed on all occasions to nest near water. Indeed the home is not infrequently found at a considerable distance from either stream or pond. It is, however, always in a burrow, and seems to be always placed on a platform of fish-bones.

Chapter XIV.

ORIOLES AND ROLLERS.

Amongst the most gorgeous of our summer visitors are the golden orioles. Their family contains allied species, but as these are less well known to the general public they may well be left to the student. Known in Europe as *Oriolus galbula*, the golden oriole is variously described by Asiatic ornithologists as *O. Indicus*, *O. Cochinchinensis*, or as *O. Chinensis* simply. Fortunately, ugly names cannot affect either the grace of his form, the glory of his colour, or the purity of his voice. He comes to us, according as our spring is early or late, either towards the end of April or the beginning of May. It was on the 5th May that I first heard his cheery notes this year. He loves to make known his presence in the early morning. For once that you see him you may hear him a hundred times for, as a rule, he does not care to expose himself to the vulgar gaze. In some parts of the world he is so shy as to avoid situations near the abodes of man, and it is, perhaps, only because the Chinese are, as a rule, not given to the persecution of birds, that we are indebted for the honour of having the golden oriole in our shrubberies and gardens. He is a bird of the trees and, so far as my own personal experience is concerned, I do not remember ever having seen him on the ground, though in his search for insects he probably does come down at times.

There is good reason why the oriole keeps to cover as much as possible. He has enemies to whom his bright yellow tints would betray him easily in the open. The consequence is that whenever he is seen away from his loved foliage, it is when crossing from one piece of cover to another. Then when the sun is shining his passage, if it can be taken in one short dash, is like the track of a golden meteor, a flash of aureate light, and nothing more. What is astonishing to the onlooker, who sees this for the first time, is the utter absorption of it in the leafage which is its goal. What was so clearly conspicuous an instant before has vanished! The tree has swallowed it up. A little experience shows how this comes about. In the strong lights of tropical and sub-tropical lands, many leaves reflect a golden tinge which agrees very closely with the colour of the oriole. Other trees are never

without faded leaves which have turned yellow, and the bird so plainly visible in the air becomes as one of these the moment it alights. If in bamboos, their yellow tints are an even greater concealment. Nature has made no mistake, then, in clothing the golden oriole. Besides his generally yellow tint, he has a good deal of black, his wings being largely dark, as well as his tail except the tip. His beak is of a most beautiful rose colour. Altogether, seen at his best at close quarters, as I have seen him a good many times, he is one of the most artistically arrayed birds that our woods can show. His mate is but little less dazzling. The bright yellow of his back changes for a distinct tinge of green on hers, probaby for protection when sitting.

The nest is sometimes arranged on the fork of a branch in a way not unlike that of the hawfinch, but at other times is suspended between the two, only very strong filamentous tissue being used under such circumstances. The little ones are as voracious as young birds generally are, and keep their devoted parents hard at work from day-light to dark, the debt due them from our tree and garden owners being commensurate with these labours. On the other hand, when once fruits are ripe, the orioles, like so many other insect-eaters insist on having a share. In this, as in some other things, they are like the thrushes and blackbirds. There is not a little in the oriole shape to suggest the song-thrush, whilst in flight there is a distinct resemblance to the undulating movements of the blackbird when the distance to be covered is long enough. There is only this to be said of the song of the oriole: it is clear in tone, it is strong and ringing, and there is some variation in it. But oriolus cannot claim in the slightest degree to be a songster, as our local blackbird can, or as the unrivalled thrush in England may. Both sexes have a most curious cat-like cry, used perhaps as an alarm for calling attention to danger. The "scrake-scrake" of the blue magpie (*Urocissa cerulea*) is used, I know, for a like purpose. But the male oriole has a few very regularly uttered phrases which may be transliterated in various ways. One of his familiar cries sounds out at intervals. "A large affair, a large affair", the words seem to be. Then comes another, "Chu-chu'll pay you: Chu-chu'll pay you," often shortened into "Chu-chu'll pay." But that which is said to give the bird its name consists of a succession of six notes, "Be patient, Oriole", being their message. From all which it might be gathered that notwithstanding its constant clothing of cloth of gold the oriole has friends and acquaintances which have a difficulty in meeting their obligations!

I take some pleasure in recording the fact that I have killed but one oriole. That was many years ago down in a

part of Hongkew now covered by houses. It was early spring, before breeding had begun, and the specimen was presented to the Museum. There is still wanting in many people that spirit of consideration for bird-life which nature ought to implant in the minds of all reasoning men, but does not. Indiscriminate slaughter for business purposes, and even for the mere gratification of the lust for blood, is still common, to the disgrace both of human law and human nature.

Another extremely beautiful summer visitant to these districts, at times, is the oriental roller (*Eurystomus orientalis.*) Here again, I am glad to be able to repeat the boast just made, for the single roller that ever fell to my gun was disposed of in the same manner, and was in the Shanghai Museum for years. He was a glorious example of what Nature can accomplish with changes rung mainly on one colour. In his case it was blue. I thought when I picked him up that I had never seen anything quite so perfect, quite so chaste, or quite so wonderful in arrangement. He was the first I had ever seen, and as at no time had he been nearer to me than the topmost branches of a tall tree, I had no idea of the miracle of beauty he was to prove to be. His head and mantle, as well as his tail, were of a rich dark blue, his back was more of green than blue perhaps, especially in some lights, purplish blue marked his throat, and a lighter blue the rest of his under parts. He was nearly a foot long outstretched.

The rollers get their name from a peculiarity in their flight. Ordinarily, this is something like that of a pigeon, but they seem to overbalance at times, and then recover themselves in a curiously interesting manner. In shape they have nothing much to boast of. Their head is somewhat massive in order to be able to carry the curiously wide opening beak, which has the characteristics of a hawfinch added to a curved tip almost raptorial in style, and a transverse width across the gape as great as total length. This is to be gathered from the name in the Latin, *eurystomus*, which means "wide-mouthed." Insect prey, taken usually on the wing, forms the mainstay of the roller's food. I am inclined to think that rollers in this neighbourhood are not very common. But farther south and in Annam, the Malay Peninsula, and the Indian Archipelago, they form a group of strikingly beautiful birds. In voice they are possessed of nothing more musical than a few monosyllabic sounds rapidly repeated.

In treating of tropical birds the observer cannot fail to be struck with two characteristic traits, the frequently astonishing beauty of the plumage, and the no less extraordinary lack of song. Why tropical birds should be beautiful, one may hazard a guess, but why they should be tuneless, is a mystery. There is nothing antagonistic in tropical plumage

to Nature's general design in protective colouring. We have instanced the complete effacement of the brilliant oriole amongst the leaves. It is the same with the most gorgeous creature that flies. It harmonizes with its environment so completely as to be lost. But why instead of a nightingale's pipe should tropical bird notes be as a rule raucous and discordant? I am utterly at a loss for a reply.

Chapter XV.

THE FINCHES.

If the representatives of Wild Life being depicted in these pages were capable of reading what is said about them, one might easily imagine that the regular denizens of the district would be inclined to resent the precedence given to some of the migrants. "Why should the summer boarders be more thought of than we who remain the whole year round?" That is perhaps the form which the query might take, and as we feel that there is some reason for it, we hasten to make amends by devoting attention without further loss of time to some of our feathered friends who cheer us winter and summer alike. We begin with some of the great finch family.

The *Fringillidae*, as they are called, find their home pretty nearly all over the temperate portions of the northern hemisphere. There is no English country boy who does not know the goldfinch, the chaffinch, the green and brown linnets, the bullfinch, the brambling, the buntings including the familiar yellow-hammer, to say nothing of the commonest of all, the sparrows. All these are members of the finch family, and hence, judging from the British specimens alone, we should have to come to the conclusion that in this family we have a very varied collection indeed, varied in colour, in voice, in habits, and in general conditions of life. If we went over to America we should find even wider differences. There is the well known red cardinal, for example, or Virginian nightingale, as he is sometimes called. He, too, is a finch. So is his still redder brother of Eastern Mexico, and his bigger-billed but smaller-bodied brother of California. But we must curb our wandering tendencies, and return to the Far East.

Père David gives us a description of 38 species under this head in his invaluable book, so that the finch family is well represented in China. Only a few of these can hope to receive detailed attention here. The sparrow, "the avian rat," as one of his recent enemies called him, needs scant description. He is in all places at all times. He speaks for himself. If he is a shade smaller in China than in England, as I think is the case, he is also marked in a slightly different way. The male here is more nearly like his wife. The Eng-

lish cocksparrow is a bit of a dandy, whilst his better half is a picture of dowdiness. A park-keeper in Washington told me the English sparrow is extremely aggressive there. He not only drives away other small birds, but he even makes combined attacks on squirrels. Here he seems to be content to hold his own by force of numbers. I have never seen a China sparrow attack any other kind of bird. I have seen him yield respectfully to the self-assertive blackbird, but he takes his place quietly alongside the dove, the bulbul, and even the azure magpie, when the food spread out for the purpose has been attractive to them all. Only for his homeliness, for his attachment to man, and his absolute trustfulness, has the sparrow any claim on our consideration. There is no beauty for which to desire him. He has no song, his nest is a collected heterogeneous proof of his lack of aesthetic taste. Many people say he does more harm than good, that he must go, and the sooner the better. They have said the same of the rat. But both rats and sparrows seem to care very little.

Of the commonest members of the finch family in and near Shanghai, we have now to consider the hawfinch *(Coccothraustes vulgaris.)* He belongs to the grosbeak group of a sub-family. Only a day or two ago one of these attractive birds gave me an excellent opportunity for examining him at close quarters. He was looking for food in a tree within twenty feet or so, and thus was brought to within stroking distance by a really good glass. One first notes his bill, that big, strong, broad-based yellow weapon with which apparently the hardest of nuts and the biggest of peas could with equal ease be "negotiated". It does not project from the centre of the head, as does that of the warbler family, but simply continues the curve of the head on the top and, with a new turn, that of the throat beneath, for all the world as though the bill were intended as the hardened "cap" to a soft-nosed projectile. That is his only striking peculiarity. The rest of him is commonplace enough, but wonderfully pretty nevertheless. Browns, light and dark, yellows, blue-blacks, and other tints go to the completion of his artistic coverture. He shuns rather than courts notice. You will find him in winter with all his family around him, perhaps with one or two families combined, for he likes a select company, and with that is content to forage about trees and gardens, caring little for the open country. He has a pretty little song, very pure in intonation, very plaintive and at the same time soothing. He seems all through the spring to be addressing his amorous tones to his own lady-love, for every cadence ends up with "chèrie".

I have had two matronly hawfinches under observation lately. One was actually over the Bubbling Well Road. She

had just selected the site of her nest one day as I was going past, and as it was not more than twelve or fifteen feet from the ground, and on a quite conspicuous branch, I took the precaution to pretend not to have seen anything, there being natives passing along of whom some one or other, would have thought it the right and proper thing to pull off his straw sandal and throw at the little builder. Apparently she was unnoticed, for her building went on till it was finished, and I hope her brood was safely brought up. The other was in private grounds, and being quite 30 ft. from the soil, and on a fairly slender branch, was safe from all but winged foes. Some maraudding magpie, some egg-stealing rook, might have come along to ravish the little home, but I fancy that the combined attack of such a pair of beaks as the defenders could bring to bear must have proved a sufficient deterrent for I never once saw the parent birds in chase of any other, and that is one of the best signs of lack of plunderous intent. Madame did not like inspection very much at first, though it was done at a distance of perhaps a hundred feet. Perhaps she felt the eyes of the binocular on her, and didn't like being watched. She would crane her neck well up above the side of the nest to see what the intruder was doing, and whether his movements, quiet as they were, meant mischief or not. After a few days, however, she seemed to have made up her mind that it was all right, that there was no deadliness in the tubes levelled at her, and so she was content to remain quiet, and it was possible to imagine that she rather liked the daily visit during her long incubation. It made a little change for her. Anyhow, her brood were hatched without harm, and are now amongst the additions to the rapidly growing birds' census since the beginning of May, this year.

It might have been mentioned that the ugly classical name of the hawfinches is derived from "coccos" a berry, and "thrauö", to break. It is thus self-explanatory. The bill of the sparrow is of the same hawfinch type, as are those of the bullfinch and greenfinch, though theirs are less heavy. The little ricebird (*Padda oryzivora*) belongs to the family. Another common member is the brambling (*Fringilla montefringilla*), but that, unlike the hawfinch we have been considering, is a migrant. It goes north during the spring and returns again in autumn. The canary we have with us always, without perhaps remembering that he too is a member of the wide-spreading family of the finches. So with the cross-bills, those peculiarly adapted birds which live on the seeds in fir-cones. They are well known in Eastern Asia. The cross-bill gave rise to the legend which "accounts for" it. It was at the time of the Crucifixion that the catastrophe occurred. Before that the cross-bill was merely a grosbeak of the ordinary type,

but when the Lord of All was fastened to the tree, some of the birds, more touched than the rest, though all nature groaned and travailed in its despair, tried to do what they could to free the Son of Man from his terrible predicament. Thus it was that the robin got his red breast and, in his fruitless endeavours to pull out the nails which fastened the Master to the Cross, the cross-bill got his mandibles so twisted that they never came straight again! Such is the story.

We must not close the chapter, however, without reference to those humble little cousins to the finches, the buntings. These number amongst them the hedge-sparrow-like common bunting which is always flitting along before us in the winter fields in China, and very much more attractive birds, such as the yellow-hammer, the Lapland bunting, the snow bunting, etc. David describes seventeen species, amongst them *Emberiza elegans*, a beautiful species known throughout the East, and to the Chinese under the name *Hwang-mei*, or yellow-brows. The far-famed ortolan bunting is a near relative to the cirl bunting of Central Europe. Both have a good deal of the yellow-tint so noticeable in the yellow-hammer. Most of them migrate, including the *Ta-hwang-mei* (*E. chrysophrys*). A numerous and most interesting family.

Chapter XVI.

THE TIT FAMILY.

Two or three days ago *Parus Minor*, the lesser tit, very obligingly came before my windows with a mute suggestion that there are other home-stayers amongst the birds of Kiangsu, besides the finches. "Won't you say some thing about me?" That, in few words, was the message conveyed. That Mrs. Tit intended it is more than I can say. I have may own theory of inspiration, however.

In any case, there she was, almost commanding inspection. In a dozen pretty ways she courted attention. "See what I can do, and watch me do it!" That was her invitation, and then she proceeded with her "turn," as they would say in the music hall. She gave a practical exemplification of the art of finding insects and caterpillars. She crept along the branches looking fifty ways at once, and making little darts whenever something good caught her eye. No crack in the bark escaped her, and, now and then, it was evident that some six-legged creature, which would do no good to the tree, was seized and transferred into that marvellous receptacle, a bird's crop. Then it was the turn of the twigs and leaves. At times even single leaves were carefully examined, the little bill picking here and seizing there, its owner the while turning herself into all the possible and impossible attitudes which only tits and such-like ethereal creatures are capable of assuming. Twigs bend with the weight, tiny as it is. But that matters nothing. Mrs. Tit is as much at home upside down as she is the other way. She hangs by the slenderest of supports, she twists, she turns, now on *terra firma* so to speak, a moment after to all intents and purposes hanging by nothing, so slender is the support she has found, the tiny petiole of some delicate leaf. But in all her attitudes, unstudied as they are, she is a model of grace. Her poses, unrehearsed and unthought-of, are such as might bring a twinge of envy to the most graceful of the other biped kind.

She was giving the whole of her attention to a so-called Chinese ash, which is not an ash at all, but whose botanical name has escaped recollection for the moment. It is on these trees evidently that the tits find most of what they want. A beautifully clothed Sebifera growing close by, with its deli-

cately tinted and veined leaves, is left severely alone. Evidently it has no insect population as yet.

Mrs. Tit has nothing much to boast of in the way of dress. Her colours are mainly blue-blacks, whites, and greys. But what cannot Nature do with even those? I am the more inclined to praise the tit just now because, for some reason or other which is now unexplainable, she was by no means one of my favourites as a boy. She was generally held to be "too cheeky altogether." Her chatter overhead showed it, and she never came down to the ground in the familiar way the sparrows, robins, wagtails, and other birds did. If ever one was trapped—a very rare occurrence—there was as much jubilation in our savage little souls as there is amongst the angels over the sinner that repenteth. Even the delicate little blue tit, which we do not see here, with his cerulean head, his black and white collar, his yellow under parts, and his grey-blue back, was not pretty enough to soften our hearts then. There was, however, a bit of shy appreciation of the long-tailed chatter-mag, by which name *Acredula caudata* of the white head was known to the country folks. Here was a lightsome little creature which even the country boy might "ignorantly worship." And with good reason. It is true that his barbarian tendencies taught him to throw stones even at the chatter-mag, but it was with a well-founded belief that they would never reach their mark, and they never did. To-day, in China, the fluttering movements of the white variety of the Paradise flycatcher remind me of the scuttling little flight of the long-tailed tits as they hurried along the English hedgerows playing an eternal game of "follow my leader," gaining a livelihood *en route*, and keeping the little company together—the long tails are never alone—by their pleasant little chatter. You may see their Chinese representatives doing much the same thing during the winter months. Just now the foliage is too thick for onlookers properly to observe such restless little sprites.

Tits are found in most countries. Ornithologists speak of some 120 species, and there are perhaps a score of these described amongst the birds of China. It is difficult, however, to be sure of the correct nomenclature when authorities disagree. Thus *Parus Commixtus* of Père David is, for example, *Parus Minor* of Swinhoe. But, after all, for our purpose in these chats, this is a matter which may well be left for the learned to fight out. Exactitude, though very desirable in a hundred different ways, is not essential to admiration. The eye is caught before the deep recesses of the mind are reached; the ear before there is logical classification; and it is through Eye-gate and Ear-gate—to borrow terms from Bunyan—that most people are drawn into a love of

birds, that love which to all such lovers is repaid "a thousandfold into their bosom."

Something has been said above respecting the food of the tits. But there has long been a wordy warfare between gardeners and mere bird lovers as to whether the tits are not a greater evil than good in gardens and orchards. It is allowed by the gardeners that the tits eat a great many insects, caterpillars and the like, but, in getting at them they are said to kill buds! I am afraid that this charge cannot altogether be disproved but, in mitigation of any punishment that might be deemed desirable, it might be argued that every bud so killed would have died through the effect of the insect or grub, and therefore the tit really ought to get off scot free. No one who has ever watched the tits and the extremely systematic way they go about their search can doubt the advantage of their service to the grower of trees. Here, in Shanghai, much of the beauty of our tree life, now becoming so plentiful, is due to the very effective searching carried out not only by tits but by bulbuls, finches, orioles, and sparrows. I have seen all these doing such duty as entitles them to every respect and protection.

Tits are remarkable nest builders. Most of them prefer holes in which they can accumulate a heterogeneous mass of moss, hay, feathers, and the like. Most of them lay eggs more or less speckled with red, though some are nearly pure white. In England people who love tits put up nest boxes, to find them, of course, often taken possession of by flycatchers, redstarts, or sparrows. There are numerous stories told of the extraordinary places which Mrs. Tit will select for her home, coming back to it year by year if possible. A pump in regular use was one of these: another was a letter-box into which letters were dropped every day. The mother is a close sitter, and one of the common country names for the tit is "Billy Biter" from the sharp pecks which fingers intruding within the sacred precincts receive. But the most beautiful nest which I personally know is that of the long-tailed tit above mentioned. She prefers the open. No holes with their stuffy atmosphere for her. All the nests of hers which I have seen have been in thick bushes—in England usually thorn or holly—probably from the protection they give. In shape the nest is much like that of the wren, but in place of the green moss which the wren uses the long-tailed tit prefers the grey-green lichen from trees. That is for the outside only. Internally the little home is a cosy collection of feathers. An enthusiast once took the trouble to count, and found that the protection of the little tits from cold had entailed on their parents the collection and carriage of no fewer them 2,379 feathers! No wonder the nest takes a fortnight or more to

build. What was always a marvel to me as a boy, and has remained a marvel ever since, was how such a tiny home—it could be taken into the inside of a baby's cap—could possibly accommodate the numerous brood which Mrs. Tit places in it, for she is not content with fewer than from ten to fourteen. Yet there they live and thrive, their parents being little less than slaves whilst they are being brought up to days of discretion. Loving little things they are, keeping together all through the year with never so much as a cross word that I have ever heard. Tweet and twitter they ever keep up in their daily hunts. This keeps them together and, for the rest, their life seems too busy a one for quarrels.

There are crested tits, which are attractive little things, but they belong to a different genus. The yellow-cheeked tit-mouse, however, should be mentioned. He is Asiatic, and nicely marked with a black head, crest and long bib, whilst his cheeks and underparts are yellow, the back being marked with black, white, grey, and olive green.

Chapter XVII.

WOODPECKERS.

Two or three times during the past week the merry cry of the pied woodpecker (*Picus mandarinus*) has been the first clear note of my waking hours. That shows two things, first, that within our Settlement limits we have a great many more trees than we used to have, and secondly, that some of them are beginning to decay. For though woodpeckers will go anywhere if there is the sort of food they like, and will search trees of all ages, their favourite hunting grounds are where trees are old and more or less decayed, for there, naturally, they find more of insect and grub food than elsewhere. It is a cheery, merry note, that of the woodpecker, with no suggestion of a song in it, but merely a call to let his mate know his whereabouts amongst the trees. Just now, you might thank your lucky stars if you caught a glimpse of him as he went across the lawn or flew from one hamlet to another in the country. Once amongst the trees, now that the leaves are so thick, it is a hundred to one that you will not seen him at all. Even in the winter, to avoid observation, he has a knack of dodging round to the other side of the trunk he is searching just as a squirrel will do, and it is only by patient waiting that you will ever get a good clear view of him close at hand, and then only if you stand or sit quite still till he has lost his shyness. Then, especially if you have your binocular, you will be rewarded for your waiting. The mandarin woodpecker is the local representative of *Picus Major* at home. With a black groundwork on the back, there are many pretty white and grey markings, and in the case of the male a red splash on the top of the head. Underneath, as is usually the rule, the colours are lighter, greys on the breast, and rosy red over the ventral parts. As I have said, this species is now more or less a familiar visitor to the more wooded Shanghai gardens, but he is best seen farther away in the country, and he is especially fond of those old clumps of firs which have grown grey in their watch over the graves of the richer departed native worthies of last century.

The green woodpecker which we find about here is a sort of second cousin to the mandarin. He is of the Grecinus type

and is locally known as *Grecinus Tancolo*, though he may well be compared with *Grecinus viridis*, the green woodpecker of British woods. He is bigger somewhat than the pied variety, and altogether different in colour, being a yellowish green on the back, with white markings on the wings, a crimson crown to the head and the ordinary lighter tints beneath. He is distinctly a handsome bird, and perhaps a little bolder than his cousin, the mandarin. At any rate he is more frequently to be seen in this province, and his undulating flight once known will never be mistaken. He usually alights close to the bottom of the tree he means to search, and then works his way upward, tapping here and there and looking everywhere. You will see him occasionally on the ground, the side of a bank for preference.

In common with the rest of his tribe he lives on insects and other tree pests, being especially fond of the wood-lice which are to be found in such numbers where there is decaying wood to provide them food and shelter. The tapping of the woodpecker is another unforgettable thing. It is impossible to believe at first that any animal could possibly strike, and draw back, and strike, and draw back again so rapidly as the woodpecker does. In olden times the sound used to be compared with that of a rattle, but I am more inclined to liken it to something modern—an adjustible electric hammer which can be set to hit as many times per second as may be desired. This gives the woodpecker tapping effect exactly, and doubtless with the aid of one of these instruments the rate at which the bird makes its strokes might be easily discovered. The sound is so rapidly continuous as to be a sort of patter or rattle, and is very effective in awakening insect life hiding under bark. When its prey is apparently secure in worm holes or other hiding places the woodpecker's wonderful tongue comes into play. This is a worm-shaped weapon with a hardened and sharpened point like the point of a harpoon, with this difference, that whilst the harpoon has barbs only on two sides, the woodpecker's tongue has them all round. As it is very elastic it can be forced to a considerable distance beneath the surface of the wood, and once fixed in the body of grub or insect has so sure a hold, thanks to the barbs, that the prey is quickly drawn out and swallowed.

Whereupon there is afforded ground for much speculation as to the philosophy of nature. Within the past month I have had occasion to note the manner in which birds feed. I have seen a blackbird within a single minute commit four six-inch murders. In other words I have seen him draw from less than a single square yard of soft soil six worms in the space of less than sixty seconds, and apparently remain as

hungry as before. I have seen swallows hunting over the same lawn and killing quite as often, probably oftener. One evening in the country I happened upon a pair of kingfishers. The tide was at its lowest, there was a shoal of young fry in water not more than three inches deep, and I saw the female bird dip twelve times in three minutes into the midst of them, every time securing her prey. Then apparently she was satisfied for she began tidying herself up a little. Now it might be argued by one who believed in the absolute beneficence of nature that once upon a time these birds all lived on vegetable matter, and that only after the "fall" they became murderers of this terrible type. There is nothing about them so conspicuously adapted to their present kind of life but might, perhaps, be explained away. But what of that tongue? What of the barbed end of it? There is evidence of design, is there not? And the design is deadly. What then are we to conclude? Was the Designer beneficent? If so, destruction is compatible with beneficence, and when Tennyson finds nature "red in tooth and claw with ravin" as she is, he must conclude that it is all for the best. But where is nature or man to draw the line? Is destruction to reign everywhere, or should it stop with man? Troublesome questions, these.

They don't worry the woodpeckers apparently, who pair off, bore their nest-hole if they cannot find one, and bring up their four or five young every year, their pure white eggs, being bedded on soft rotten wood. There are many species and varieties of woodpeckers in different parts of China, and a specimen of the Fukien rufous kind will be found in the Shanghai Museum. He is about the size of the green species, but far less handsome, being covered with dark brown plumage with ruddy brown bars. Another variety is the *Yungipicus Kalecnsis*, a woodpecker about the side of a bulbul and marked very much like *Picus Mandarinus*. David describes a still smaller variety under the name of *Vivia Innominata*, but he does not say that it is found in this neighbourhood. It may have been this that I once saw in the Chekiang province when on a Christmas shooting trip. My companion and I were walking back to the boat one day with our guns under our arms. Crossing a mulberry plantation our attention was attracted to what we at first took to be a member of the tit family. It was a tiny little thing, and at thirty yards looked so like a tit that we should probably have passed it without further notice. But as our path lay closer to the tree, one of the low-cut mulberries, we saw that our little friend was certainly not an ordinary tit, and closer inspection still, of which he appeared to take no notice, shewed far more resemblance in bill and head to the woodpecker

family. So we stood in wondering admiration. What could we call it? It had all the lightsome grace of the tits, but there was the woodpecker bill. We debated the question, the subject of debate all the while continuing his careful search for food within about ten yards of us. Science suggested shooting him so that he might be definitely examined, catalogued, and stuffed. Admiration argued mercy. How pretty he is, how lissome: watch him now standing on his head as the blue tit will: and then, how trustful! Could anybody but a miscreant murder a fragile little creature like that after standing and weighing his fate? Besides, your cartridges are No. 5. You know they are, and the little inch or two of daintiness threatened with doom would be blown to bits at this distance. So there are a dozen reasons why you shouldn't shoot. "Tut, tut!" Science replied. "Think of the gain to the world's knowledge. This is a bird which is possibly new even to ornithologists. You have never seen anything like it before, and probably never will again!"

True words. I cannot tell whether there is a sort of avian telepathy which warned the little woodpecker-tit that Science might get the better of the argument, but he was off like a flash, and we saw him no more. We often think and speak of him, but to this day the debate has never been ended, though I think admiration and mercy are gradually getting the better of the regrets of science. Still—I should very much like to know exactly what she was.

Chapter XVIII.

PIGEONS, DOVES, AND SAND-GROUSE.

"Pigeon, a well-known bird of the dove family." "Dove, a pigeon." Thus "The Twentieth Century Dictionary," a distinction without a difference found in a search for real differences. Skeat helps even less. "Dove," with him is connected with "dive," which is a piece of etymological information interesting only because it shows the name to have been first applied to other birds. "Pigeon" he tells us comes from an imitative word formed of the cry of the young. Thus the student of nature eagerly in search of an answer to his own query, "What is the difference between a pigeon and a dove?" is met at the outset with linguistic difficulties. As a matter of fact the two words are often used interchangeably, with this reservation that those birds of the genus *Columba* having marked swellings at the base of the bill are usually called pigeons, and those without them doves. The difference is easily noticeable if an ordinary tame pigeon is compared with one of the wild, wood varieties, e.g., the ring dove and stock dove in England or *Turtur Sinensis* and *Turtur Rupicola*, as we know them in this province.

The most common about Shanghai is *Turtur Sinensis*, the Chinese turtle-dove. This is the bird which is becoming as tame in the western district of Shanghai as is its near relative the ring dove, wood-pigeon, or wood-quest of the London parks. Two years ago I had an opportunity of studying these birds in four separate districts in England, in the northern and southern counties, in north Wales, and in London. In the three first its degree of wildness might be measured by the amount of persecution it received from shooting men, but there was little difference between north and south. Once seen, it was impossible for a man to approach nearer than a couple of hundred yards or so. Hence the contrast in St. James's Park was marked in the extreme. There doves came fearlessly to one's very feet, searched about by the side of one's chair for crumbs or bits of biscuit, and showed no more alarm than would a barndoor fowl. Such may be the extent of trustfulness between man and wild nature when the wild nature of man has been curbed by law and custom. I had seen the same conditions on the island of Pootoo a

quarter of a century earlier. Why do we not extend them? Here in Shanghai I have often seen wild birds fed with "crumbs from the rich man's table," the charm of the sight repaying a million times over the little trouble given. For at one and the same moment I have seen rooks, magpies, bulbuls, tits, sparrows, blackbirds, and doves feeding away to their own great delight and that of the spreader of the feast.

Biblical references to doves are also references to love, gentleness, harmlessness, and the like. Mendelssohn's aria, "O for the wings of a dove" is perhaps one of the most marvellously beautiful songs ever written, and easily worth ten thousand volumes of the meretricious stuff which goes by the name of music to-day. Gentleness is indeed a characteristic of the dove family. Seen alongside the selfish assertiveness of the blackbird, the grasping tendencies of the rook and the wiliness of the magpie, the modest retiring nature of the dove appears in sharp and pleasing contrast. The most in the way of violence I have ever seen a dove do is to make a semi-threatening rush at another of his kind, which the attacked one avoids by getting out of the way for a yard or two. His courting of his mate is a most amusing combination of deference and love. He bows again and again, he coos, and coos, he puffs out his feathers to show off to best advantage that pretty speckled black and white tippet he wears, and which corresponds with the "ring" of the ring-dove. At times he feels impelled to do something more to show the strength of his passion. Then one sees him winnowing his way up by a beautifully curved ascent into the air to the height of a hundred feet or so, from which in a similar curve he free-wheels down on wide-spread wing to the branch on which she sits. Soon, of course, building operations commence. These are very rudimentary. Young doves are, evidently, most amenable to advice, and when Mater Columba says, "Now sit still, or you'll fall off," (it isn't a matter of falling *out*), baby Columba very quietly obeys. I have watched the whole operation during the breeding season this year, the nest being close to a path along which many hundreds of people passed every day, none of them apparently, except myself, ever dreaming that egg-laying, incubation, and rearing of young were going on so near. The nest was on the side of a small tree trunk away from the path, and before it was finished the leaves of our common house-creeper hid it so completely that the casual glances I could give never solved the question whether there were one or two young ones. There are never more than two.

Turtur Rupicola is almost exactly a reproduction of what we know as the turtle dove at home There are barred markings on the back and wings which differentiate it from the Chinese turtle dove we know so well. My own experience

is that the "Eastern Turtle-dove," as it is called, is rare in this immediate neighbourhood, except perhaps in winter. I have seen it at the hills, but the next province, Chekiang, is the place where in winter I have found it most plentiful. Sometimes it was called by sporting men the Kashing pigeon to distinguish it from that better known at Shanghai. It is somewhat bigger, too.

Notwithstanding the fact that the pigeon family brings forth only one or two young to a brood, a single pair has been known to have a progeny of nearly 15,000 in four years, counting, of course all their descendants within that time. This fact, taken into consideration with the voracity of their appetites, marks out the pigeon family as one to be kept down when in the neighbourhood of man. Many years ago an American observer estimated the number of passenger pigeons forming one immense assemblage which he knew, at well over two thousand millions, and allowing each of them a daily half-pint of seed, far too little as I can testify, he reckoned that they would consume more than seventeen million bushels per day! In self-defence, then, man must shoot, trap, and otherwise destroy as many of these birds as he can. Necessity knows no law. And it would seem as if Nature intended this to be done, for the pigeon being a first cousin to the fowl family, is apparently designed as food for man. At the proper season, therefore, pigeon shooting is as defensible as the shooting of pheasants, partridges, grouse, and others of the gallinaceans. Not pigeon-shooting from traps, please take note! That has led to various atrocities.

Few sportsmen would think of connecting any of the grouse with the *Columbidae*. Yet they are somewhat closely allied, the link being that extremely interesting bird, Pallas's sand-grouse, *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*, with its swallow-like wings and tail, and its occasional incursions into regions where it is usually never seen. I have seen little flocks of them in North Manchuria, but at times they have been known to penetrate to the utmost extremes of western Europe. There were incursions of them into England in 1863 and 1888, why or wherefore men were at a loss to account. They came in the spring. Some people think that the Bible, in some parts, for quail should read sand-grouse. Vast flocks of them are seen together at times, and, as their name implies, usually in districts of a more or less desert nature. There are several species of them, one of which is a native of Tibet. The Chinese have a belief that their irruptions are often omens of coming political or dynastic change.

Besides various structural peculiarities which connect sand-grouse with the *Columbidae*, there is the quite uncommon habit noticeable when both are drinking. Most birds dip the

bill into water, fill it with liquid, and then lift the head so that the water may run down the throat, as though there were no throat muscles fitted for forcing water upward as is the case with cows, horses, and other quadrupeds: with man also, a juggler being able to drink a glass of wine when standing on his head. The pigeon family on the other hand, as also the sand-grouse, plunge the bill into water and hold it there until their thirst is quenched. Their immense powers of flight enable them to indulge their liking for dry soils and yet get to water when they need to. On the wing they more resemble plover than they do their game cousins of Scottish and English moors.

Before closing this little notice of these interesting species, it should be mentioned that Père David describes fifteen different sorts of pigeons and doves belonging to China. Some, however, are very local, and found only in the west or near the spurs thrown off by the mighty Himalayas. Some are connected with the island fauna, with Hainan or Formosa, for example. Of pigeons, as distinct from doves, there may be mentioned the Eastern rock pigeon (*Columba intermedia*) which is found in great numbers amongst the hilly parts of northern China. It is usually said that all our tame varieties of pigeons have been bred by crossing from the common will rock pigeon in England. It would be interesting to know whether the Chinese have any such belief respecting theirs and whether they consider their rock pigeon also the parent of all the rest.

Chapter XIX.

SWALLOWS, MARTINS, SWIFTS, AND NIGHT-JARS.

In China, no less than in England and other countries, all the swallow family are welcome visitors. How large a part the swallow fills in English literature every reader knows. Probably it is the same in all other literatures, for there is, in the swallow tribe, an appeal which invariably goes to the heart of man, the appeal for protection. Sometimes the swallow insists on building in our chimneys, oftener in our out-buildings, and in the form of the house-martin, *(Chelidon urbica)* in rows under our eaves. In Germany as in China it is quite a common thing for the householder to provide a shelf on which the nest is placed, be it in the stable or, more commonly in China, in the dwelling room of the family where, as "The Dream of the Red Chamber" says,

"New swallows flit amongst the beams
Each in its thoughtless way."

It is difficult to imagine a better object-lesson in kindness and gentle behaviour to wild creatures than this. A special inlet is provided for the birds whenever necessary, and not even the most thoughtless boy would dream of harming the family visitor any more than he would the family babe.

What the difference is between swallows and martins is a question which I have frequently found to puzzle even people who, liking birds, take some interest in them. It is useless to say that the family name of the swallow is *Hirundo* whilst that of the Martin is *Chelidon*. That means nothing. It is necessary to go to marked distinctions on the outside. If in looking into a nest you saw white eggs marked with brown and grey you might safely hope to see a swallow visiting it. If the eggs were pure white they would be a martin's. But this again is of no use in the field. Here is a bird now before us hawking "low o'er the grass" for flies, a sure sign of rain. Is there any mark by which he may be distinguished. There are two or three. He is below the line of sight as draughtsmen say, and so you see only his back. Well, if that is a uniform purple black, and if his tail is so forked as to stream behind somewhat in two longish points, he is a swallow. Had he been a martin there

would have been a white patch on his rump, and his tail would have been less fully divided and shorter. If on the other hand the barometer stands high, and the birds are soaring overhead, it will be seen that the under parts of the martin are white, whilst the swallow will show a forehead and gorget of a ruddy colour. The tail difference will be equally marked whether seen from above or below. It makes of the swallow a bird with the body of a tit and yet a length of some seven and a half inches.

Swallows come to us early in April as a rule, but the capriciousness of our spring plays them sad tricks sometimes, rude Boreas being too strong at times for Zephyrus, notwithstanding what the Chinese poet, Pao Chao, of the fifth century says:—

"Swallows flit past, a zephyr shakes
The plum blooms down."

I have seen half-frozen swallows glad to hawk round moving cattle in the field for the occasional flies they put up, and I have been myself accompanied by a swallow for the same purpose when I have been out after spring snipe.

It seems hardly correct to call swallows and martins wild birds but there is a kind of martin that is entirely so, which, whilst not particularly afraid of man or shunning him, yet keeps to itself amongst the hills, or wherever it can find a bank to supply room for its nest. These are the sand martins, whose classical family name is *Cotyle*. They keep to the country, and having found a hill-side or precipice, even a railway cutting will do, into which they can bore holes for their nesting places, proceed to excavate a tunnel to the depth they require, just as mining engineers run an adit into a hill. But as we have none of these in our immediate neighbourhood, there is no need to dwell further on their characteristics.

Another class of birds very much like the swallows in form are the swifts. Scientifically, however, these are nearer the humming birds and the night-jars than they are to the true swallows. The common swift, the devilling, or devil-screecher as he is sometimes called by country people in England, is much more common there than he is here. Swifts seem to vary in numbers yearly much more than swallows do. I can remember seasons in England when there have been very few. The year 1908, on the other hand, seemed to me remarkable for their great numbers. It is quite a rare occurrence to see swifts in the immediate neighbourhood of Shanghai, but I have seen them sweeping across the sky in their lightning fashion over the Feng-hwang Shan. Their cry is a long-drawn scream: whence the name given them by rustic England. Père David describes seven species including those most closely allied.

A very strange and curious bird, more or less intimately related to the swifts, is the night-jar. All sorts of extraordinary stories have been told of this interesting bird. His name of "goat-sucker" (*Caprimulgus* is his classic denomination: literally the "goat milker") hints at one of them. We need not wonder why such marvellous beliefs arise. The night-jar, as his name implies, is not a bird which makes his appearance common by showing himself in daylight. At the present time, if I happen to be awake in the night or to rise, about break of day, I am sure to hear the "churr" of this interesting bird, the "jar" part of his name being merely an attempt at the representation of his call. He indulges in this quite frequently, and in so characteristic a manner that it can never be mistaken. In thirty-five years the times which I have seen him might perhaps be counted on the fingers of one hand. Once, probably frightened from his day sleeping place, one came and alighted on my verandah rail taking his usual position longitudinally along it. He was approached near enough for the beautiful protective markings of his plumage to be noted, the dark ashy grey of the breastwith a close mottling of black, the mixture of browns and blacks on the back so cleverly combined as to make the wearer indistinguishable when in his natural position on the limb of a tree. There on the verandah rail the unnatural swelling was conspicuous enough, however close to the wood the bird might snuggle down.

On another occasion, and quite by accident, I saw one in his own chosen resting place. Just as in a puzzle picture one may look for something for an hour without seeing it, and then all of a sudden catch the outline and wonder how it was possible to look at all without seeing from the beginning, so with my second night-jar. I caught sight of him in a flash, as he was resting on the thick branch of a tree. It was broad daylight at the time. One might have passed a score of times and not seen him, so perfectly did his body and its colouring represent a knot on the upper surface of the branch. For some minutes I stood in mute admiration, the night-jar evidently having perfect faith in his invisibility as a bird, and not meaning to "give himself away" by moving. So I stood and watched, taking in all that the eye could see. Moving a little nearer, and still keeping my eye fixed on him, he began to show signs of disquiet and, as birds strongly object to being stared at, he by and by flew off.

On still another occasion I watched one in the dusk of the evening hawking for moths over a cotton field. That was in late September when moths were in great plenty. With all the swiftness of the swallow, the night-jar, thanks to his size and colour, looks a little like a hawk. His enormously wide

gape, and the stiff bristles round his mouth probably enable him to catch most of the moths he tries for. They certainly have no chance if it comes to a question of speed. Being out after autumn snipe at the time, I had a shot at the new quarry with no result but to scare him away altogether. Once again I saw another similarly engaged in hunting and admired his operations for some time. The most recent occasion when I have seen one was in the late summer of last year when he came flying over the trees and across the lawn just as dusk was turning into night.

The Chinese have rarely any love for uncanny spirits of the dark, and when birds have calls, as some of the night-jars have, which are very articulate, men are apt to red into them a good deal more than is there. "The Dream of the Red Chamber," however, mentioned above, contents itself with noting the cry thus:—

"The night-jar now has ceased to mourn
The dawn comes on apace."

I have never been able to decide precisely what species or variety it is which frequents Shanghai gardens and woods, never having had an actual specimen for comparison with ornithological descriptions. I am inclined to think that it is yearly becoming more common as there is more cover for it.

Chapter XX.

THE SHRIKES.

More interesting than lovable: that in four words is probably the character which most ornithologists would give of the shrike family. It is impossible to refuse a chapter to a group of birds which, mainly by one variety, force themselves on the attention of all wanderers over the hills and plains of eastern China. The shrike is always with us. Not in dense masses as we find the rook, not in family groups as we see the hawfinches, or the longtailed tits, not in occasional collections as we find larks in winter, but always singly or in pairs. The shrike is not a sociable bird. He "gets on" after a fashion with other birds of his size, but now and then one sees an incident which tends to prove that there is little love lost between him and the smaller birds.

His family name carries its own condemnation, for his Latin title, *Lanius*, means simply "the tearer, the lacerator, the butcher", and it is as the butcher-bird that he is generally known to a large number of English people. His English name "shrike" is merely a variant of the word "shriek", and comes from the screaming nature of his cry of alarm. At times, however, he can warble a by no means unpleasant little ditty of his own. I have heard him many times when, perfectly content with his day's hunting and sitting on some convenient branch, outstanding so as to be clearly visible and command an all round view, he has returned thanks to the All-Giver before the close of day. Not infrequently this has been in the winter time, when a warm afternoon, cloudless and sunny, was being rounded off with a rosy glowing in the west. Then a dainty little song from *Lanius Schah*, with his ruddy chestnut back and strong curved beak, sounds as though never in his life had he been guilty of the death of even the meanest of God's creatures. And I must give him this much credit, at least in this part of the world, I have never once come across what is commonly known as a shrike's larder, the thorn-bush where he sticks up the uneaten carcases of his victims—insects, small birds, mice, frogs, or what not. One meets with hundreds of the red-backed shrikes in this and the next province, and it seems certain that if they were in the habit of putting their food into storage—cold or warm according to the season—signs of it must be equally plentiful.

My own experience is, however, as I have said, for though I have often looked for a shrike larder I have never found one. Probably our common shrike is almost entirely an insect eater, though once upon a time one did me the favour of acting as retriever of a wounded quail which perhaps I should not otherwise have found. He pounced down upon it from his stand on a small bush and so showed its position, proving at the same time that he has all the will of his larger friends in the matter of flesh-eating.

The great grey shrike of the Far East, is *Lanius Sphenocercus*, whose French name *Pie Grièche*, or speckled magpie, will far more clearly describe him to English readers than any other. He is really a very handsome bird indeed, with the blacks and whites which make the common magpie so charmingly conspicuous. He has a grey back and a somewhat lighter covering underneath, whilst his wings are banded black and white, the side of the head surrounding the eye having the black splash characteristic of most of the butcher-bird family, all these simple tints being combined, as Nature alone can combine, into a perfect assemblage pleasurable to the eye and useful to the wearer. They call him *Lanius Excubitor* in Europe, "the butcher sentinel or watchman." I have already remarked on the preference which shrikes show for some commanding standpoint, not too high. That this has its advantages is evident. It is no less plain that whilst it may give opportunities to the shrike to see his prey, it none the less places him in a position where he may likewise be seen by whatever enemies he may chance to have. Now it seems that certain hawks and falcons are by no means averse from *Lanius* himself. Evidently, therefore, to be safe on his high perch he must be not merely watchful but possessed of quick sight. That he has this has been proved again and again, and in countries where men make a business of capturing hawks and falcons for sporting purposes the shrike becomes one of their most efficient aids. Pigeon decoys are set out as a lure for the hawks and close by a captured shrike is so tethered that besides having a good view from where he stands, he can retreat into a little shelter prepared for him when the hawk comes. The bird-catcher remains quiet in his hut, busy about anything he cares to turn his hand to, until the clamour of the shrike informs him that a hawk is near. He knows even the kind of hawk, because whilst there are some of these birds of prey who will take only what they can seize in their swoop, there are others who will alight on the ground and so far lower themselves as to search for their hidden prey. The shrike clamours according to his fears, particularly fears of the hawks that alight. Thus forewarned, the bird-catcher knows what to do, and if

things go as he wishes, he soon has his quarry safely ensconced behind bars.

Visitors to the Shanghai Museum will find some six or eight varieties of the shrike family in a case in the N.W. corner of the bird room. Both those already mentioned are there, as also a pair of the bull-headed shrikes. *(Lanius Bucephalus)*, marked on the back pretty much the same as our own bird, but with a barred breast and belly covering. The dingy shrike *(L. Tephronotus)* is also represented, and the thick-billed shrike, *(L. Magnirostris)*. Many of these birds are migrants, and it is quite possible that in this neighbourhood, as in others, there are occasional visitors which surprise and delight the observer by their difference from those with which he is best acquainted. In the spring of this year, when on a visit to the Hills, I had several opportunities of watching a shrike which was new to me. As birds had begun to breed I had no gun, and so was possessed of no better weapon than a binocular. That, however, was good enough to provide a great deal of interesting occupation. My new friend was smaller than *L. Schah*, who is always with us winter and summer. He was in fact about the size of an ordinary bulbul, but otherwise was possessed of all the shrike characteristics. His short wings and comparatively long tail were there, the shrike flight was there, the love for the conspicuous position was there, and the voice was there. The markings on the back were not unlike those of our common friend, but those on the under parts were of a lighter colour, a creamy white with no dark lines visible through the glass. It is possible that these birds were the variety which Swinhoe has described under the name of *L. Waldeni* out of compliment to Lord Walden, though the specimens discovered by him were in western China, in Szechwan. I believe that Swinhoe thought this bird and *L. Magnirostris* might be the same bird seen, the one in winter, and the other in summer plumage.

Somebody somewhere has called shrikes the "falcons of the insect world," but one fails to see the appropriateness of the phrase. The falcon is all grace and swiftness, the shrike is rather clumsy than otherwise, and his flight has nothing of that compelling rapidity which we associate with the cruiser of the air. Both are birds of prey after their fashion, but the falcon is a gentlemen, whilst the shrike is a—butcher. The falcon swoops, the shrike descends. The falcon tears, and is satisfied. The shrike kills and impales. Precisely why he does this nobody knows. Insects thus kept do not improve by the keeping, neither, one would imagine, would mice or small birds. Some people suggest that the larder is an attraction to flies, and a bait to other small creatures which the butcher may make his prey, but all this is pure hypothesis.

Nesting shrikes have little of the artfulness given to some of the land-nesting birds, such as the lapwing and others of the plover family. These are adepts in leading a dog or his master away from the position of their eggs, just as the partridge will employ the most extraordinary artifices to attract attention to herself whilst her little ones scuttle away amongst the undergrowth. But the shrike, on the contrary, rather shows by his fussy clamour exactly where his carelessly constructed home is situated. The great grey shrike builds as a rule in trees, but rarely deep in the wood, the parents preferring a more open position on the outskirts. Twigs, fibres, and straw form the outer materials, the lining being made comfortable by feathers and other soft substances. The eggs are a greenish white with variously coloured blotches. The red-backed shrike on the other hand builds, more frequently in bushes, a nest of stalks lined with hair, etc. The eggs vary between salmon colour with light red markings and a yellowish-white with olive and lilac markings. All the shrikes, notwithstanding their character otherwise, are model parents, tending their young most assiduously until they can take care of themselves, and then discarding them, as is the general rule with birds of prey. We may end as we began, the shrike is a bird more interesting than lovable. He has been kept in confinement, but so far as I know has never been a pet.

Chapter XXI.

MYNAS, STARLINGS, ETC.

One of the earliest recollections of many a country boy in the home lands must be the starlings which year by year bring up their broods without the slightest attempt at concealment in or near the paternal home, sometimes in the thatch, if the house be of the very old-fashioned sort, sometimes under the eaves, but always in some hole or other where the young have perfect cover from the weather. Very often a hollow apple-tree supplies the necessary shelter, but my own first recollection of the starling is of a pair which many years before I could remember had made their home close by the side of the chimney in my grandmother's house, and continued to do so for more years than I can tell. They found an entrance under the slates and went some feet before coming to the spot they had originally selected for the nest. There, by dint of climbing inside the building, it was possible to get to them, and there, twice a year, they produced their clutch of light, blue-green eggs, and brought up their hungry brood. Even as a boy I was struck with the frequency with which both father and mother came with food, a very few minutes being the longest absence, from the early morn of an English summer to the late sunset—some eighteen hours all told.

Grown up, the country boy watches starlings for other reasons. The immensity of their numbers: the raids they make on garden and orchard: the beauty of their plumage, and above all the extraordinary precision of their manœuvres when, in their airy multitudes, they compel a wondering interest. An old volunteer, who remembers the days when the art of "wheeling" was practised in field exercises, cannot fail to remember how proud a company officer would be when his men were able to "come round like a brick wall." Even a brigadier would praise the difficult operation of wheeling a battalion or a brigade in close order, when there were perhaps four or five thousand men engaged. But officers, whether company or field, had rational beings to deal with, men who had been instructed in the art of keeping relative positions. The starling has no school. His drill ground is the sky. If he reasons, he does it remarkably well, but

probably he doesn't. His drill is instinctive or intuitive, done "without thinking," as old sergeants declare all good drill is. But in a starling army there might be five hundred, five thousand, or five hundred thousand. Numbers made no difference, so far as I ever saw, for the wheeling, the "countermarching", the dispersions, and re-assemblings were all done as though every bird were fixed in the air at its respective distance from every other, and could not "lose ground" if it tried. Now a moment's consideration will suffice to show the marvel of this wondrous precision, for whilst some birds in a flock have to circle round a few yards, others have to go perhaps a hundred times as far in the same time in order to keep line with their own set, just as in the "wheel" of a long line of cavalry, the outer horses have to gallop their hardest whilst the pivot man marks time. But these are birds! Who taught them? Who appointed their officers? How are their orders given? How understood?

These are questions which no man has answered. The facts we have before our eyes, and all that one cares to remark about them is that they ought to make even the drilled man more modest, whilst the undrilled should hide his unwilling head and clumsy feet for very shame. But, notwithstanding all this philosophic digression, it is unfortunate for us that in this part of China we have no starlings of the species above named—*Sturnus vulgaris*—with his acuminate breast feathers, his metallic sheen, and his sprightly ways. There are starlings in China, but in this, and, I believe, in all the parts farther south, they are different in species. There is the grey starling (*Sturnus cinereus*), of which Père David says, "En automne et en hiver, il se répand en troupes innombrables sur toute l'étendue de l'Empire." In spite of this, however, it has not been my fortune to come across these immense numbers in this neighbourhood. That may be for want of sufficient inducement due to lack of the *Sophora Japonica* on whose branches Père David says they find a favourite food. The next province — Chekiang — has another very charming species, the white-headed starling (*S. Sericeus*), which, unlike some of its cousins, is not a wanderer. Some of the starling friends of my youth remained with us all the year, but many migrate. The habits of the bird of Chekiang vary little from those of its common European relative, though in plumage they are entirely different.

An allied genus is that of the starlets—*Temenuchus*. Two species are shown in the museum—*T. Sinensis*, the Chinese starlet, and *T. Dauricus*, the Daurian starlet, but so far as I know, neither comes within reach of Shanghai. They spend the winter in S. E. Asia coming northwards to the western parts of China for the breeding season.

By far the most common and the most interesting local member of the great starling family is the myna, but he is technically placed in a different genus, that of the *Acridotheres*, our familiar friend being known as *A. Cristatellus*, the crested myna. No one who has been a mile or two into the country, and who has anything of an eye for winged life can have failed to notice a bird of somewhat stouter build than the English starling, with a yellow bill and a little crest springing from the root of it, black plumage with circles on the expanded wings, and here and there white markings. That is our local myna. There is a little in his flight to recall his European cousin, and still more in the voice, different though it be. A wanderer in the country in any part of this or the neighbouring provinces is almost sure to meet with little parties of mynas, some six or eight perhaps. When not busily engaged in feeding, which they do on the ground, they are usually to be seen gathered together on a tree whence their musical chatter falls pleasantly on the ear, especially so in winter when most other birds are silent. I have never seen more than perhaps a dozen or so of mynas together at any time, and therefore have no means of judging whether or no they might, were there enough of them, rival a murmuration of starlings in England. Perhaps they might. But I have many a time paused on a bright winter afternoon, when shooting up-country, to listen to the breezy little chorus arising from select assemblages to be found anywhere within a hundred miles of Shanghai. They can talk as well as sing, and that is one reason why they are so popular as cage birds, a fact which would have suggested a connexion with the starlings even if structure and habits had not done so. Indeed there is little to choose between a starling and a myna in the matter of mimicry. Both have the faculty of imitation largely developed, and it is no uncommon thing for a listener to be deceived into thinking he has a little circle of songsters near him when all the time it is but a single starling "trying over his parts" as it were. As with the English bird, the myna seeks out a hole for its nest, an old tree frequently providing the necessary shelter. Thence the parents may be seen going for food, usually insects, which are frequently found, again as in England, on the backs of cattle, or close by them on the ground. For this reason there is just as close a friendship between Chinese cattle and mynas as there is between English cattle and starlings.

There are far more beautifully dressed mynas than the plain black and white variety so familiar in this neighbourhood. Some of the Indian birds are gorgeous in the extreme, but the most beautiful with which I am personally acquainted is the myna of Honolulu with a charming assortment of blues and greys. There, out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean,

with a delightful climate comparable in many ways with that of Penang, birds are naturally clad in tropic robes, and the myna is no exception. His beauty, however, does not seem to have caused his persecution, for I found him hardly less accustomed to the presence of man that is the myna of Shanghai. It is to be hoped that bird-hunting for millinery purposes may soon be suppressed by international law.

Another genus allied to the starlings and the mynas is found in the grackles (Family, *Eulabetidae*). Only one specimen pair of these is to be seen in the Shanghai Museum, the black-necked grackle (*Graucupica Nigricollis*), a handsome bird brought, I think, from Fukien, the home of so many varied species of beautiful birds. It has a mixed black, white, and grey covering, of which the most noticeable portion is that which gives the descriptive title, "black-necked," there being a handsome velvety collar right round. In India and other tropic regions some of these glossy starlings, as they are also called, shine with all the tints of the spectrum. One is a beautiful emerald green almost all over. Another is a rich golden chestnut above with black markings, the lower parts being a creamy white. Still another has a most glorious livery of blues and greens of varied shades, making it a veritable gem of beauty. Some, too, have tails so long as to give them anything but a starling look. Some have wattles, some are without. Altogether, our humble local representative of the great starling tribe has no occasion to be ashamed of his family.

Chapter XXII.

PLOVERS.

Perhaps before these words appear in print, "the rolling year" will have brought down our first migrants from the north. I have known snipe down as early as the first week in August, and we have now arrived at the end of the second. At any time from now onward to chill November we may hear the shrill cries of the night fliers as they circle round and round over the Settlement seemingly distracted by the unnatural light. Snipe, woodcock, plovers of many sorts, ducks, geese, and all the rest will follow each other in their flight to warmth and food. Our local migrations will have been noticed by everybody who takes an interest in birds. Our rooks are gone: so are most of the blackbirds. Not since the first week in July have I heard the call of the cuckoo, nor, since about the middle of the month, the merry cry of the Paradise flycatcher. All these have disappeared, the flycatchers till next April, the rooks till the end of the month or so, and the blackbirds till about the beginning of October.

But the bird-lover need not trouble about that, since during the coming weeks he will have the opportunity of studying one of the most interesting and varied of our bird families—the plovers and their allies. Here in a delta we naturally have a good deal that is attractive to all the long-legged species. There is always an abundance of water. Marsh land is plentiful, and the sea-coast close at hand. Even the most closely cultivated land is low and moist. Much of it is paddy field. Indeed it would be difficult to imagine a more suitable spot for waders and water birds generally were it not for one thing, the thick-set population. What the southern part of the province must have been during the first few years after the Taipings had exterminated the population over large tracts may be imagined from the condition of affairs during the second half of the decade of the 'sixties,' when, in the neighbourhood of Kahshing there was a sort of No-man's-land rapidly going back to jungle. There for years was found a paradise of game, from deer downward.

But we are specially interested just now in the plover tribe, and perhaps the best representative of the group, the one most taken note of, and the most interesting to sport, is

the golden plover, known in England as *Charadrius Pluvialis*, but out here represented by a slightly different species, *Charadrius Fulvus*, the "gold-coloured." The home bird measures at times from ten to eleven inches in length, but that is considerably above the average of those with which I have personably come in contact in China. The summer dress of the male is dark in colour on the upper parts with specks of yellow, the under portion much lighter, and in parts white with dark mottling. Beak and legs are likewise dark, almost black. The female is of somewhat lighter tint. Both sexes undergo a marked change in their seasonal dress. The golden plover has but three toes. Its French name, *Pluvier doré*, suggests to an Englishman, who might not otherwise think of it, the derivation of the term "plover," which really comes from the Latin, *pluvia*, rain.

Somewhat longer in the leg than the snipe, the English representative of the plovers is also somewhat heavier. I have never weighed any in China, but I should think speaking from memory and general impression, that there is not much difference between their weight here. As to eating, no general rule can be laid down. Some think the golden plover excellent. I have experimented with most kinds, and find that whilst all are more or less good when well cooked, they hardly equal the snipe at its best, and never the woodcock.

Plovers migrate in large numbers, but in this neighbourhood they are usually seen in small companies, and are noticeable for their power of sustained and graceful flight. When alarmed they will circle round and round at some distance from the intruder who has frightened them, but if satisfied that there is little or no danger will return and alight within a gunshot or two of the place from which they were put up. They run as well as they fly. In days of old it was by no means an uncommon thing to see a little congregation of them on the Racecourse if the ground were damp enough to attract them. I have even seen a few on the cricket ground itself, once when a match was in progress! Unless persecuted, they are not very difficult to approach, and hence there is no great difficulty in bagging them. I once saw one knocked over by a marble shot from a boy's catapult! When wild, shooting them is a different matter.

Another plover of almost world-wide fame is the lapwing or peewit, the *Dix-huit*, as the French call him. Technically he is of the allied genus *Vanellus*, and is further distinguished by the term *Cristatus*, or crested. Some people know him as the green plover, green being prominent in his upper markings. But by whatever name he is known, the peewit is a handsome bird, and well worth watching through a good glass. He is somewhat shy and does not

allow visitors too near, especially where he has learnt the deadly effects of modern firearms. Unlike the golden plover, the peewit has four toes, the one behind being fully developed. Seen at his best, and when quite unconscious of the watching intruder, the peewit shows to great advantage. In the first place there is a fine crest on the top of his head, and this he can erect at will. There is a bright metallic green and purple lustre in the darker parts of the back, the head, and the breast, but these are brightened by lighter coloured feathers round and beneath the eye and ear, though even these feathers are speckled with black. The primary wing feathers have a whitish tip to them, otherwise they are a glossy black. The tail is black and white with coverts of a rufous tinge. When on the wing the black and white markings are as distinct as those of the magpie. No other bird could possibly be mistaken for a peewit on the wing, the form of the body and wings, together with the peculiar method of flapping them, being entirely unique. Peewits are essentially gregarious. Even in the breeding season they keep more or less together, and vast numbers of their eggs are taken for the London market, plovers' eggs being considered more or less of a dainty, thus leading, it is to be feared, to the robbing of many other nests besides those of *V. Cristatus*. The true-born Cockney is easily deceived respecting all matters relating to country life.

It is not a common thing to find many peewits in the immediate neighbourhood of Shanghai at any time, but in some parts of the province they live and thrive in great numbers. They are as well known as the partridge for their cleverness in drawing off either dogs or men from their nest and young. In late spring and early summer one sees great numbers of them in the moister parts of lower Siberia through which the railway runs. There in marshy districts they probably find ample room for nesting free from all interference except that of their natural enemies, hawks, weasels, etc.

A third plover must not be omitted from our little catalogue—the grey peewit *(Chettusia cinerea)*. Readers will find one specimen in the Shanghai Museum in the case in the S. E. corner. The grey peewit is longer in the legs than his cousin, and altogether different in plumage. His head and back are grey, but there is a very dark patch on his breast, though lower down he is quite white. Both tail and wings are tipped with black. The body is bigger than that of the peewit, but not very much. In my own experience the bird is not common in this neighbourhood. I shot one once after a somewhat long and difficult stalk, and sent it to be stuffed. There is nothing particularly attractive in the plumage of the grey peewit, yet its comparative rarity and

the great height at which it stands mark it out at once from the common run of winter plover visitors.

It will be necessary to return to the plovers before proceeding to the consideration of other allied species, but as our autumn nights will soon be vocal with the cries and calls of migrating flights, a word or two about their varied voices will prove of interest. I know of no better authority on this matter than the Scottish naturalist, Thomas Edward, who has been immortalized by Smiles. "You could hear the shrill whistle of the redshank," he says, "the bright carol of the lark, the wire-like call of the dunlin, the boom of the snipe, and the pleasant peewit of the lapwing. . . . The sandpiper screamed its *kittie-needie*, the pipit its *peeping* note, whilst the curlew came sailing down the glen with his shrill and peculiar notes of *poo-elie poo-elie coorlie coorlie wha-up*." In another place he speaks of the "harsh *scream* of the heron, the *quack* of the wild duck, the *birbeck* of the muirfowl, the *wail* of the plover, the *curlee* of the curlew, the *piping* of the redshank and the ring dotterel, and the *pleck-pleck* of the oyster catcher."

Not a few representatives of these pass over us during the autumn migration, and it is at night that we hear them best of all. If any pass during the day—which is doubtful—their cries are lost in the noises of the streets, but in the night they are so clear as to frighten superstitious Chinese. Occasionally an observant westerner looking up may see a flight crossing the face of the moon at a great height. Whimbrel, curlew, dotterel, and other plovers form probably the mass of those we hear. The ducks and geese do not come till later.

Chapter XXIII.

PLOVERS AND SANDPIPERS.

One of the prettiest of the common plovers is the dotterel, our eastern variety being known as *Ægialitis veredus* or by other classical names according to the taste of the ornithologist. Dotterels are three-toed, and some authorities separate them into a different group by themselves. They are not quite so big as golden plovers are in England, the female being the larger and the finer looking bird. The eastern representative has a white head and neck with a ruddy chestnut breast terminated by a black belt, the remainder of the under parts being white. The upper colouring is mainly brown in tint, the wings being darker and the legs a yellowish white. The main distinction, however, is the ruddy breast. One may at times in the proper season see bunches of them being hawked about the street for sale. They migrate in immense numbers.

When the world was young, and man in a state of such innocence, from a sporting point of view, as the Chinese villager is to-day (for the simple reason that he cannot afford to buy a gun) the dotterel seems to have grown up under an assurance of human harmlessness. This hereditary belief remained longer than the innocence afore-mentioned, and the consequence was that the birds retained their trust too long. Then, of course, they were called fools for their trustfulness, "dotterel" and "dotty" being different forms of the same word. It is curious that some kinds of birds should thus continue to be apparently without fear of man. I have caught a "booby" myself on a ship's rail, its name being perfectly descriptive. But the dotterel is by no means a fool where its young are concerned. Even so acute an observer as Thomas Edward, to whom reference has already been made, was once misled by one. He was on one of his many naturalist wanderings when one day there rose near him only to drop a few yards off, hobbling and tottering as if wounded, a dotterel. He started in pursuit, and the same thing happened again and again. Edward really thought the bird was wounded by the shot of a friend which he had heard

just before, but on meeting the friend he learnt that the bird shot at was a tern, not a dotterel. "But," the friend added, "I found a nest and the young of that bird as I came along." They went back, and it was found to be within three yards of the spot from whence Edward had put up his bird, evidently the mother, and evidently not a "dotterel" in the depreciative sense.

Another pretty little plover is the ringed plover. There are two kinds, major and minor. The so-called "ring" is a circlet, more or less complete, of black feathers round the breast and shoulders with a thinner white one above round the neck. The main colouring on the back is the slaty grey of so many of these birds, and that below white. These are perhaps the shortest-billed of all the plover tribe. Very dainty little creatures they are, running swiftly, flying gracefully, and sometimes whistling shrilly when on the wing. There are at least a dozen varieties of ringed plovers known to naturalists. *Ægialitis placidus* is another of them common in China from north to south. This is known to some as Hodgson's ringed plover. As a rule it is not much more than six inches long. Still another, *Æ. Mongolicus*, or the Mongolian plover, is very common over many parts of Asia and even Australia. A great many find their way to the Shanghai market. *Æ. cantianus* may be known by the white ring round the neck and an incomplete black one. This is one of the so-called sand plovers of which there are many species scattered about the world. They are all shore birds.

More or less allied to the plovers are the sandpipers. The commonest is the jerky little gentleman which gets up in front of one's houseboat when it is going up a creek, flies on a hundred yards or so just skimming over the surface of the water and then alights, to repeat the operation till it is tired of the game, when it doubles back in order to be able to indulge its entomological researches undisturbed till the next boat comes along. Most local sportsmen know it as the snippet. It stays with us throughout the year, and may often be observed busily searching along the water's edge for food during the summer season.

A much bigger bird is the large-billed knot, *Tringa crassirostris*, which is comparable in size with the golden plover. The ordinary knot, *Tringa canutus* might, but for its short bill, be mistaken for a snipe. Its classical title gives an excuse for deriving its English name from Canute, the old form of which was Cnut or Knut. So far as I know, however, there is no sufficient ground for unquestioning acceptance of this derivation. *T. acuminata*, or the russet-headed sandpiper, is another visitor of this wide genus. *T. alpina* is the well-known dunlin, called also *T. cinclus*.

He is considerably smaller than the knot. The red-necked stint is known as *T. ruficollis*. Dunlins collect on the seashore in immense numbers, and a flight of them in fine weather when their silvery white under covering may be seen is something to be remembered. They are very noisy birds as a rule. One of the sandpipers, *T. subarquata*, is known as the curlew sandpiper, or by some as the pigmy curlew. It is much the same size as the dunlin, and has markings more or less like those of the curlew, the mingled browns on the back, the speckled throat, and the white under covering. One other must be named, *T. subminuta*, or *T. pygmaea*, a diminutive little fellow with a spoonbill. He is known as the spoon-billed sandpiper, is about the size of a snippet or smaller, his characteristic being the spreading out of the last half inch or so of his bill until the breadth is perhaps three quarters of an inch. Temminck's stint, *T. Temminkii*, is also known in the east. It is approximately the size of the dunlin. *Pseudoscolopax semipalmatus*, the half web-footed "false snipe," is a long-legged handsome bird, with snipe colouring on the back, but with head and breast a sort of ruddy chocolate.

There are still others to be noticed from amongst the many shore and marsh birds which visit us in their semi-annual wanderings. But those already named are enough to give some idea of the variety to be found. Earlier in the year the snipe and woodcock came in for their share of attention, and there is no need to repeat what was then said. But the sportsman, of course, will not forget that however many kinds of plovers and other long legs there may be to attract him, there are also, in variable numbers according to the conditions prevailing, his old friends the long bills. And there is this consolation always, at least in Shanghai and its neighbourhood, the birds shot are either going to or coming from their breeding places. They are not being killed, therefore, in the breeding season. I have an old encyclopaedia of sport in which the writer has the conscience to pen the following:— "As a summer shooting we hardly know a more lively or more amusing one than pulling down the plover. Like most other shooting at birds on the wing, it requires both tact and habit. A dog assists your success, particularly, it is said, in the breeding season." The unfeeling scoundrel! Luckily we have a close season now by law—not in China unfortunately, except so far as the Shanghai Municipal Council can make one; but in the minds of all sportsmen of feeling, legal restrictions are unncessary.

Still another excuse, or rather two excuses, for shooting snipe, plover, and their congeners, if excuse were needed, are to be found in the vast numbers of these birds and their

excellence for the table. The numbers of migrating waders every year could surely be counted in thousands of millions. They stretch in a dotted line right round the world so far as its land portion is concerned, for they are found regularly going southward at this time of the year, in America, Asia, and Europe, their main breeding places being the vast wastes in or near the Arctic circle. As to their eating, I have already given my opinion, but as that is far less enthusiastic than the verdict of some others, I may be permitted to transcribe an old French dictum taken from the encyclopaedia afore-named, "*Qui n'a pas mangé de vanneau* (lapwing, especially), *ne sait pas ce que gibier vaut.*"

Shore shooting anywhere near Shanghai is apt to be disappointing. Cover is non-existent in most places, and once birds are wild there is no chance of getting within gunshot. It happens at times, however, that along the sea-wall tempting bits of marshy ground are to be found, and then there may be a chance under cover of the "wall" to get on terms with some of the many waders. I have got redshank and whimbrel by that means, and on one occasion when the land round about was thirsty with drought, whilst there still remained water along the inner side of the wall, I had the best half mile's snipe shooting that ever fell to my lot. In the creeks round about, also, there was a chance at any time of finding teal or duck, whilst an occasional crane might be seen.

But for those who like mud-larking, marsh shooting beats most shore work. In the first place you never know on a Kiangsu marsh what is going to get up. It may be a pelican or a peewit, a snipe or a snippet, a pheasant or a falcon. There may be snipe by the dozen, there may be none. Plovers of sorts are certain to be seen, perhaps a rail or two or a moorhen. Hares occasionally bolt from where you would least expect them, and from bits of dry ground a quail will whirr off, or more commonly a pair of them. A hen harrier or two are almost certain accompaniment. So there is all the charm that variety can give. But one must be in the mood for it or there is little enjoyment. Perhaps the best preliminary to success is to get into the nearest mud hole on landing and flounder about for a minute or two until thoroughly saturated at least up to the knees. There will be no lurking desire for that picking of the way which is certain to find you looking for firm ground when you should be all eyes and ears for whatever may be flushed. Many a chance has been missed through this. If the sportsman is a bit of a botanist as well as a shot, he will, every now and then, come across marsh plants which will appeal to him by their novelty as well as their beauty, so that he will have more than one string to his

bow. There is, besides, an added pleasure to marsh shooting in this province. One is nearly sure to have the ground to himself, and there are no grave-mounds. There is therefore little chance of having shots spoilt by finding an old woman or a small boy in a line with the muzzle of the gun. The floundering wanderer may splash and splutter, but he congratulates himself on being monarch of all he surveys. Then, just as he slips down into a particularly soft spot, up goes a teal. One hurried shot is followed by another more carefully aimed, and *Querquedula crecca* joins the snipe, the plovers, a rail, and a pheasant already gathered.

Chapter XXIV.

CURLEWS, WHIMBRELS.

In all deltas there is a line which, as a classical writer once put it *nec tellus est nec mare*, is neither sea nor land, that delightful admixture of water, sand, mud, and the creatures that live therein which long-legged and long-billed birds love. Here, when it suits them, they congregate, at times accompanied by myriads of true water fowl, the swimmers that is to say. Here in China there is less of this kind of ideal haunt than might be expected, less than may be seen in European and American deltas, for the simple reason that China is the land of the Chinese, and where in other parts of the world delta land would be left to drain itself, here it is taken in hand as a huge sponge might be, squeezed dry, and occupied. But this wandering from curlews to coolies must be checked. I have merely suggested it for a purpose, not that the reader should have his attention taken from the bird to the man, but that he should, by every polder which he will see if he visits the Kiangsu coasts, be reminded that the presence of man means sometimes the absence, sometimes the comparative rarity, of certain species of birds. The wilder the land, for example, the better the curlew likes it. He does not draw the line too strictly, but like the American backwoodsman, he thinks if there are men within a mile or two of him, the world is getting too crowded. That is probably the reason why in the thickly settled parts of the province one rarely if ever comes across the curlew. Personally I have never seen one anywhere near Shanghai. Whimbrel are sometimes as common as snipe in spring, but there is a big difference between the whimbrel and his comparatively giant-like relative.

If there is any sportsman who does not admire the curlew I have yet to meet him. If there is one who never says hard words of him, he likewise is a rarity, for it is tantalizing to see, as may be seen in winter when the birds have become gregarious once more, an assemblage of scores without the faintest chance of getting in range. Curlews love the wilds, whether upland moors or long stretches of coast. In either of these places they can see the approach of an enemy from afar, and as they are always on the watch, getting to close quarters is a difficult matter.

A picture of a full-grown curlew in good condition is a picture indeed. There are none of the gorgeous tints of the pheasant to dazzle the eye, no tropic or metallic lustre to astonish with its brilliancy; indeed the colours of the curlew are homely in the extreme, simple browns, greys, and whites, with a dash of gold in the bill, and all arranged in such a manner, so lined and dotted, and dashed with lights and darks that, squatting on the bare sand, the curlew might well be mistaken for a little hummock of sandy weeds left by the tide. It is not for colour that the curlew demands our admiration, but for form. His classical title *Numenius* means "like the crescent shape of the new moon" and has special reference to the beautiful curve of long bill. This may extend from six inches to nearly a foot, and is but one of the several curves which a draughtman's eye loves to follow. From the base of the bill there is a gentle rise over the top of the head followed by a delightful curve round to the junction of the neck with the body, then another, more abrupt, joining that of the back and terminating at the tail. The frontal curves round the neck, breast, and belly are equally delicate. Please don't take this description to read in front of specimens to be met with in collections, otherwise the results may be as disappointing to the reader as they would certainly be detrimental to the descriptive fame of the writer. Stuffed birds too often are no more like their living representatives than a scarecrow is like a man. That is generally the misfortune of the taxidermist, who perhaps has never in his life seen a living specimen, which also accounts, of course, for the unnatural attitudes in which both draughtsmen and taxidermists sometimes present their efforts to us.

As a bird for the table the curlew has size to recommend him, for he runs from a foot and a half to over two feet in length. The biggest whimbrel, on the other hand, rarely exceeds the size of the smallest curlew. In England the common curlew is known as *Numenius arquata*, but his representative here is called by Père David, *N. lineatus*, the whimbrel being *N. phoeopus*, the "dark faced."

In form and general appearance the whimbrel is much like the curlew, proportionally a little thicker in body perhaps, and the markings are much the same except that the darker parts of the wing coverts are less marked in the whimbrel than in the curlew. Like that of its larger cousin, its *habitat* is very wide, varying as it does

"From Greenland's icy mountains
To India's coral strand."

In April it may frequently be met with in this province when on its way up north. Amongst its favourite spots then are the newly flooded paddy fields, but it is characteristically

wary, and but for the cover of clumps of trees, bamboos or the more solid shelter of a grave mound the sportsman would have difficulty in getting within range. Late August and September nights are often vocal with their cries as they move back on the return journey. A man who can imitate their call may frequently lure them near enough to get a shot. In weight they are about the same as the woodcock, from twelve to fourteen ounces or thereabouts. Seebohm mentions meeting the whimbrel in his Siberian wanderings, but he says nothing of the curlew.

Another long-legged wading bird which may be found in our cooler seasons is the stilt, whose name suggests its height. Its long thin shanks may reach to ten inches, perhaps a foot, yet its body is but the size of a lapwing's. In full plumage it is a bird of startlingly strong contrasts, for whilst the breast and underparts are the purest white, the back and wings are of the darkest green, so dark as to be practically black. Indeed *Himantopus candidus*, or *H. melanopterous*, is known in England by the name "Black winged stilt." When alarmed, it is the picture of alertness, standing as it does at the full height of its long legs and extended neck, its keen outlook all round taking in every chance of a surprise, its bright eyes, with their scarlet irises, watching without cessation the distant cause of alarm.

In another branch of the same family as the stilts there is another curious summer visitant, the jacana, or water pheasant. There is a pair in the Shanghai Museum, and the remarks previously made respecting the art of stuffing may be taken in connexion with this pair. If the visitor remembers that the jacana is described by David as "un magnifique oiseau," he will see exactly the point of my remarks. Technically our jacana is known as *Hydrophasianus Sinensis*, or *H. Chirurgus*. Chocolate browns, whites, and orange are the colours which outwardly make the jacana what he is, but his chief peculiarity will be found in his feet, the toes of which are abnormally long and fine, and as though that were not enough they are terminated by claws which in themselves are equal in length to the whole toe in some birds. The object of this immense spread of support below is seen in an instant when the bird is found in its natural haunts. Curiously enough the only occasions when I have been able personally to examine it have been at wide intervals but always on the same spot, the lake-like "harbour" at Bing-wu, where the meeting creeks widen out and a good deal of space is covered during the hot weather with floating growth. It is on this that the water-pheasant is at home. It is here that he may be seen walking—perhaps stalking is the better word—over the green growth in search of food. His

"pheasant" appellation is derived from the length of his two long tail feathers, which are carried in a graceful curve as the cock pheasant sometimes carries his. Through a glass on each occasion I had a good look at this most interesting creature. He seemed perfectly at home, taking no notice of the passing boats, nor heeding in any way the native noises round about. If alarmed, jacanas dive, and remain out of sight, under the weeds, etc., probably with the bill out of water, for a considerable time.

One other cool weather visitor demands notice before this chapter is closed, the not less remarkable than beautiful avocet. The most striking peculiarity in this bird is noted in its classical name *Recurvirostra avocetta*, the curve of the bill being in the direction opposite to that of other birds, viz. upwards. At a distance it looks exactly as if in place of a bill the bird had a cobbler's awl sticking out in front of its head. There is not the slightest need to suppose that this is an abnormality due to accident in the beginning for just as the long down-curved bill of the curlew is fitted for deep probing, so the recurved bill of tbe avocet is fitted for surface scooping especially in shallow water. Nature rarely, if ever, makes mistakes, and there is no need to suppose one here. The avocet is very distinetly marked, pied in black and white, with a warm brown patch on the back. Its legs are long but less so than those of the stilt. It is a splendid runner, and, like practically all birds of its family, can swim if necessary. This it does with a backward and forward motion of the head just as one sees in a moorhen under similar circumstances. In weight the avocet is much the same as the woodcock

Chapter XXV.

BUSTARDS, RAILS, ETC.

The world seems to have conceded the kingship of all winged creatures to the eagle, but, so far as I know, there has been no definite choice made as the monarch of game birds. What shall we say of the bustard? At his very best he stands from three to four feet in height, his outspread wings may measure even up to six feet, and his weight to thirty pounds! Surely those are pretty solid claims. As he is graminivorous, living mainly like our own barn-door fowls, and our common partridges and pheasants, upon grain and vegetable diet, his flesh is comparable with theirs. Add to all these attractions the fact that he is difficult of approach, and what more could the sportsman require? One thing more. That he should be plentiful, that there should be no fear of extinction when man's hunting fever is on. Well, that too, is granted, for of bustards the name is legion. They pair off, or divide up into little parties of females each with its lord and master for the breeding season, but they congregate again during the winter months into parties running from a half dozen or so to scores, or possibly hundreds.

Like the curlew, the bustard is a bird of the wilderness. He loves the open country. Whilst he was yet a denizen of Great Britain, our broad open downs and fens were his favourite haunts. Salisbury Plain was one of these. But what with enclosures, with increased population, with more deadly weapons, and other deterrents, the bustard has forsaken its old British haunts, and if some dim stirring of instinct were now to direct one to our shores, the chances are that, instead of welcoming the long-lost friend, our insane gunners and collectors would assemble in their hundreds each intent on the acquisition of a dead trophy over which he could gloat and about which he could boast. All the old tricks for getting within gunshot would be tried, the farmer's cart, the stalking horse or cow, and so on, for whilst the bustard very rightly objects to the presence of man, he is quite tolerant of what we call the lower animals. This sometimes brings about his downfall even in China, for behind the cover of a lumbering, nose-ring-directed buffalo it is possible at times to get near enough for a shot. The bustard

is too heavy to be very rapid in his movements. Old writers curiously contradict each other on this point. Some say that the bustard used to be run down by greyhounds, even their great speed being taxed to the utmost. Others, and these are probably correct, say that it never attempts escape by running but takes to flight at once. Its Latin name *Otis tarda*, the slow, or lazy bustard, is sufficently characteristic. Indeed even our English name comes from the Latin through the French, though there must have been a British or Saxon name besides.

So great is the bustard's aversion from man that there are several cases on record of attacks made by the bird on the human biped. In one of these the bustard was captured and tamed. It has never been my good fortune to meet with a live bustard in any of my wanderings, and in consequence all that is said here is second-hand. But I am told that in favourable seasons bustards are to be seen down by the sea-wall, and it is quite a common thing for them to be found in our Shanghai markets during the winter, figuring in the lists as wild turkeys. Nature has marked the bustard much as she has marked the quail, the partridge, and other birds living as a rule on the ground. The colouring is as protective as it is delightful to all who look at it with an eye to the appreciation of its purpose. Barred browns and black cover the upper parts, the under, as usual, being much lighter. The only exceptions that I know of to this rule of dark above, light below, are to be found in one or two of the plovers, the golden plover being one. The male bustard has some loose ornamental feathers emerging below the eye and hanging gracefully down the neck. The little bustard is a somewhat handsomer bird, with a very effective black and white bib or collarette, but is not, I think, found in China at all. McQueen's bustard which is much smaller, and has almost a mane of ornamental feathers, is common in western Asia, but not I think so far east as this. I should be quite prepared to learn that the Tartars and probably even the northern Chinese are accustomed to hunt the bustard by the help of falcons and trained hawks. In this neighbourhood, I expect, our market supplies are trapped in some way.

Turning to the rail family and its friends we come to a variety of birds interesting in a number of ways, but not birds that provide much sport. They are difficult to flush but easy to shoot, and for this reason are usually left alone. Our common landrail or corncrake is not numbered amongst the avian family of China, the bird which to my boyish mind was "the bird-that-never-slept," for it never seemed to matter what time I awoke in the night, the "crake-crake," "crake-crake," was sure to be keeping up its endless monotony. But the water-rail *(Rallus aquaticus)* we have under the name

of *R. Indicus*, a shy, retiring bird never found far from ponds, lakes, reed-beds, etc. and very difficult to put up. I have spent half an hour or more in the attempt to flush a bird of whose whereabouts to a few yards I was quite certain. At last the search is successful, and the poor little frightened thing, convinced at last that skulking is useless, takes to its wings. What a contrast to the dart of the swift-moving snipe, the spring of a teal, the bustling rush of a cock pheasant, or even the whirr, from under your very foot almost, of a quail! The rail flies as though his weight were lead and, from the dangling of his legs, half the lead might be tied to his toes. One doesn't shoot such as these except on rare occasions for the specimen case. But it is interesting work to prove to them that wings are really given to be used on occasion. The most difficult task of this sort that ever fell to my lot, was the discovery of a specimen of the little rail, *Porzana Pygmaea*. This required the aid of a keen working pointer, and was at last so successful that the tiny little creature did get up, all arms and legs apparently, a must amusing sight, to be left alone of course, almost with an apology.

Another English bird, the moorhen, or water-hen (*Gallinula chloropus*) is common in China. I have very early recollections of the moorhen, of her quiet habits, her nest amongst the rushes, to which I used to wade sometimes to steal eggs—and very good eating they were—of her power of concealment, and on one occasion of the curious effect that pursuit has on her. I was hunting bare-legged and bare-handed for one in a ditch, and suddenly came upon her motionless as if dead. I picked her up and took her to the house, and there it was discovered that she was very much alive! This curious hypnotic state has been commented on by many observers, but I have never as yet met with any really satisfactory explanation of it. Moorhens, notwithstanding their general air of retirement, are quite willing to be friendly and trustful. Witness those to be seen in St. James's Park in London. Two years ago, I found it most restful after a hard day to go there and wander about or sit watching the perfectly fearless manner in which these and other retiring birds treat that portion of the human race which has been truly civilized by the London police.

A taller, and slightly bigger bird, with far longer toes, is the water-cock, *Gallicrex cristatus*, or *Gallinula cinerea*. He is fairly common during the warmer months, and especially in spring time may be found of an evening stalking about the paddy fields. He is browner in colour than the moorhen, and not nearly so dark. His one ornament is a greenish yellow ball of fleshy matter above the bill which shrivels up to almost nothing when he is dead. He is more often heard than seen, for his call is loud enough and lugubrious enough to

draw attention at any time, but, for reasons above given, one does not shoot him as a rule. The only specimen I have ever bagged was for purposes of stuffing. He was got many years ago on a paddy field now occupied by part of the eastern side of the Shanghai railway station!

The white-breasted moorhen, *G. Phoenicura*, or *Erythra Phoenicura*, is another bird common enough in China. It seems to have all the characteristics of its better known relative, the ordinary moorhen. Last spring when two or three of my family were with me at the hills, we made a careful stalk one day after Erythra. She was supposed to be in or near to a fairly thick clump of bamboos not far from the junction of two large creeks, and with lots of cover everywhere in the immediate vicinity. There was everything in favour of the bird, therefore, but the hunt was successful, and madame moorhen with her white throat finding herself practically hemmed in went up, and gave us all a good view of herself, which was all we wished.

Other members of this interesting family are the coots (*Fulica atra*). Of no use whatever when brought to bag, the coot is usually left alone. *Rallina Mandarina* is Swinhoe's name for a species differing in some respects from the other rails, and there are still others, David placing the number known in China at eleven. As has been said, they are not of a sort to attract the sportsman out only for blood, but when ornithology conquers sport the rails are as interesting a study as any I know.

Chapter XXVI.

QUAILS.

"Come out, 'tis now September;" so runs the first line of what used to be an extremely popular part song, dealing with the delights of the autumn, its harvests, its blaze of leaf colour, and its sport. "St. Partridge's Day," or the first of the ninth moon, has long been famous as the end of the close season for *Perdix cinerea*, our common partridge. England, Scotland, and Ireland are at one in thus protecting the partridge, and from 2nd February to 31st August forbid under penalties the killing of a single one of the family. Grouse have their close season from the 11th December to the 11th August, but the quail, with which gallant little bird we now have to deal, is in England placed merely under the Wild Birds' Protection Act, and this safeguards it only between the 2nd March and the 31st July. Ireland, wiser in this as in some other things, honours the quail with the same protection as is given to larger game, from 11th January to 19th September. This is ample for the safety of the species, and at the same time provides space enough for winter shooting. China, of course, has no close time for anything, not even missionaries! So far as the quail is concerned, our own Municipal Council has been careless in its duty. It has done what it could for the pheasant and the partridge, but it has left quail to the tender mercies of the native pot-hunter and the miscreants who support him. Doubtless the Council would reply that the quail is migratory and needs no protection, but this is only a partial truth. I have proved by personal observation that some quail do remain in this neighbourhood throughout the year. By all means, therefore, let them have just that protection which the other game birds get, and which can be given by a few scratches of the Secretary's pen.

For this long digression, at the very opening, too, I must apologize both to quails and to quail-lovers. But forgiveness will surely be forthcoming for an effort, weak though it be, to plead the cause of what is in every sense of the term a game bird. *Coturnix communis*, the common quail, is famous alike in prose and poetry, in classics and common talk, in history, in science, in the cock-pit, and the pot. And he is good in all. Never, so far as I know, has a

bad word been said against him. If the Israelites in the wilderness so gorged themselves with quail flesh as to breed a pestilence, that was their fault, not that of the delicate little bird. Higher critics, or lower, I forget which, have suggested that possibly the birds that came to the children of Israel were not quail, but *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*, Pallas's sand-grouse, but that does not affect the argument.

It would be difficult to find any large stretch of country between the Arctic and the Antarctic circles where the quail has never been seen. He is a venturesome little fellow and goes everywhere. In England, however, his treatment has been such as to suggest to him that there may be safer quarters elsewhere, and the result is that quails have become somewhat rare. In Ireland, the more reasonable legislation has had its reward, and there the birds are still fairly numerous; indeed, the quail has sometimes been called the partridge of Ireland. In China when circumstances are favourable, quails are to be found in immense numbers. In the lands surrounding the Mediterranean they are caught whilst migrating, not singly or by dozens, but by hundreds of thousands. Modern man in western lands, and even here in the east, is accustomed to consider the quail somewhat of a delicacy. It is not without interest, therefore, that we read that in some of these Mediterranean lands, work-people make a special provision in their agreements that they shall not be given more than a certain fixed amount of quail's flesh, just as in England, centuries ago, apprentices had it inscribed on their indentures that they were not to be fed on salmon more than a specified number of times per week! Times change, and we with them.

The quail is so very familiar that little detailed description of him is needed. He is the smallest of the true game birds, measuring over all not more than about eight inches. How very complete a protection may be his covering of ruddy brown and straw colour, with dark shadings, is known by all who have ever had to look for him amongst his natural surroundings. I once dropped one stone dead close by a grave mound. There was, therefore, no doubt as to its whereabouts, and yet when I came to look, no sign of the bird could I see. I walked round and round the mound. Five or six times this was repeated, and finally, just as the search was about to be given up, and as I had returned to the spot where as I thought the bird ought to be, there, sure enough it was, lying at my feet. I had walked over it several times, but as it happened to have fallen in a very natural position, its protective colouring had provided a perfect example of the difficulty of the problem, "Find the bird." Many a similar story could be related by all sportsmen who have had much

to do with quail, and who do their own retrieving. Another proof of the practical invisibility of the quail when on the ground is provided by the frequent failure of the hen harrier to find them. One watches one of these handsome birds quartering a patch of dried but uncut paddy. They cross and recross the ground not more than a yard above it, much as a well trained pointer or setter will work, yet they not infrequently fail where man, thanks to the noise he makes, will put up the birds. The main outward difference between the male and the female quail is to be found in the two black circlets round the throat of the former. These begin the one on the outer, the other on the inner, side of one eye and swing round to similar positions on the other side.

The males are said to precede the females in migrations. As a matter of fact the sexes seem to keep together only during the breeding season, and it is a rare thing to find them congregated in very large numbers. When the surroundings are exactly to their taste quails will of course be found in greater numbers, but so far as my own experience goes, they never get up more than eight or ten together, and very rarely more than three or four. I once came across a patch of standing wheat straw from which the ears only had been removed. Here, as in addition to the grain that had been shed there were many seeded wild plants, and perfect protection from hawks, the quail were in hundreds, but even then only bevies of six or eight were flushed at one time. A recent writer in "The Field" has ventured an opinion that only a thirteenth quail ought to be missed. One miss out of thirteen may be allowed for accidents, etc. but I am inclined to think the gentleman would change the percentage after a little of such practice as I got on that afternoon. When, with their shrill little cry, quail scuttle away in every direction like sparks from a blacksmith's anvil, the sportsman is apt for a while to be bewildered. He looks at this and aims at that: he changes his mind and determines to bag a third, which is saved by the intervention of a fourth and by that time all are out of range. Under ordinary circumstances two or at most three get up together, and this they do from close under one's feet, or even behind one's back. This, of course, if there are no pointers or setters at work. These useful assistants have quite as much partiality for the scent of the quail as they have for that of the larger game birds, and in days gone by when, in the province of Kiangsu, pheasants were nearly as plentiful as barn-door fowl, many men strongly objected to their dogs' drawing their attention to such small game. There is a fear, sometimes, that only partially trained dogs may get into bad habits in the retrieving of quail. I had a young pointer with

me once, as keen as mustard, but the first quail he picked up disappeared down his throat—beak, legs, feathers and all!

Above all things the quail likes a dry place on which to bask. You may find him in a marsh, but not in its mud. You will also find him in cold weather in the most sheltered corner of a field, or at any rate on the sunny side of one of the raised pathways which divide fields in China. Crisp feathery grass is a temptation, as is the fluffy stuff which one finds here and there in the winter fields connected with certain kinds of seeds. For the market, great numbers are trapped or taken in nets, and sent in alive. Formerly Shanghai shooting matches were at quails instead of pigeons, but I do not remember one during the last fifteen or twenty years, and a good thing too. The clay "pigeon" serves the purpose from a sporting point of view equally well, and even better, and there no longer remains that disagreeable uneasines which worries modern man when he kills unnecessarily. Even the tiger, he remembers, never kills for mere sport. To the Chinese, the quail is all that the game cock—or in fact any cock—is to the Manila man, something which appeals to the taste for blood and at the same time allows of unlimited betting. We must not condemn too readily that of which we have ourselves been guilty. Cockfighting has been put down by law in England only since our fathers can remember, and quail fighting will continue in China for many a decade yet. But one is sorry for the bird: sorry that his tenacity, his pluck, and his gameness generally should not be put to better purpose.

Besides the common quail there are in China the Japanese quail, a slightly different species, and the so-called Chinese quail, *Excalfactoria Chinensis*, somewhat more handsome in colouring than the others. An attempt was once made to acclimatize the American "Bob White" quail here, a considerably larger and more handsome bird, but the effort met with no success.

Chapter XXVII.

PARTRIDGES.

But for the fact that the "Bob White" is often spoken of as a partridge, it would have been necessary to apologize for introducing him first amongst the quails and then here. As a matter of fact, however, this beautiful bird, of which Americans have a right to be proud, is much nearer the partridge in weight than he is to the quail, and in other ways has real claims to one of his classical titles *Perdix Virginiana*, the Virginian partridge. His re-introduction here, however, is due to a desire to call closer attention to the experiment mentioned in the last chapter. A few Shanghai sportsmen conceived the idea that it might be possible to acclimatize the Bob White in China. A committee was formed in the year 1890, Dr. Ward Hall taking the chair: the necessary money was forthcoming, and the order sent. No fewer than 425 birds were collected and sent from Chicago. There must, unfortunately, have been gross ignorance or gross carelessness in transit, for from that time the story is tragical. "Two coops, originally containing 36 birds each, arrived at San Francisco on the 21st December with 43 dead and 29 live birds in them. On 27th December, 10 coops more were received, containing 203 live and 150 dead birds. When they were shipped by the 'Belgic,' 69 more had died, leaving only 163 alive. When transhipped in Yokohama only four birds were alive, and of these one died on the voyage, so that of the 425 shipped from Chicago for the 'Belgic,' only three reached this alive." This trinity was turned loose, and an 'Express" issued imploring men to be pitiful if they happened to flush either of them. As a guide it was mentioned that the birds were about the size of the bamboo partridge. A gleam of hope closes the chronicle. About a month later two of them were seen, "*strong on the wing.*" Both might have belonged to one sex: at any rate, I have never known of any progeny. But apart from the terrible mismanagement that there must have been, is not the story sufficiently encouraging for at least one more effort to be made with all possible care, and what is even more necessary, knowledge. The second application should go to one of the ornithological societies in the States, where, if my repeated experience of American

officialdom is any criterion, it will meet with the readiest welcome, and be responded to in the most effective fashion.

The comparison of the Bob White with our local bamboo partridge introduces us at once to that most interesting member of the Chinese fauna. *Bambusicola Thoracica*, as he is called, is, indeed, quite as interesting to us as his second cousin, *Perdix cinerea*, is to friends in England. Perhaps more so, for it is part of our nature to value anything in proportion to the difficulty of its attainment. Now you may walk stubbles in England—if indeed the modern machines leave any—or better still, turnip fields, and with the aid of a pointer or two may put up as many coveys as the land may contain. It is not so with the bamboo partridge. Personally I have never, not even once, flushed one of them except out of thick cover. They doubtless do feed in the open, or near it at times, but I cannot say when. Once flushed, they are not difficult to hit though the flight is fairly rapid, and they have a trick of getting up, as quail will do, in little bunches close to your feet. Once down again, however, they will not rise a second time unless very closely pressed. I have thought at times when watching our larger breeds of sporting dogs trying to find them in cover which hardly a terrier could get through, that the ideal dog for that work would be a carefully bred cross between foreign and native dogs, provided the resultant progeny possessed the foreign nose and intelligence in the native body. The cry of the bamboo partridge is, as Père David puts it, "une longue série de notes perçantes et diffère totalement de celui de nos perdrix."

I have mentioned the bamboo partridge as a local bird, but that must be taken, by men resident in Shanghai, not to mean the immediate neighbourhood of that city, but of the province as a whole, and of Central China generally. I have never seen one within 50 miles of the Settlement. Mr. Cornish, of the Kiangnan Arsenal, and a friend of his a few years ago introduced some bamboo partridges at a point not more than a score or so of miles from us, where descendants of them have since been seen by friends of my own. The exact latitude and longitude of that spot however, is only to be revealed in good time by the "longue série de notes perçantes" of *Bambusicola thoracica* himself!

One of the commonest of the partridge family to be found in China is *Perdix chukar*, or *Caccabis chukar*, which by some ornithologists is likewise described by the tell-tale word, "*pugnax*." This variety is extremely plentiful in the N. W. provinces and in Mongolia. Another kind of the bamboo variety is well-known in the provinces west and south. This is *Bambusicola Fytchii*. *Bambusicola sonorivox*, belongs to Formosa. The nearest approach to the English bird is *Perdix*

Barbata, which is plentiful in the north of China and south Siberia.

Partridges are believed to pair for life, and both parents are most assiduous in their attention to their young. In England, as a rule, there are from 12 to 20 eggs per nest. More than this have been frequently found, but on such occasions it is believed that two hens are laying in the same nest. None of the partridges seem to care for life in the woods. The Bob White loves to be near wooded stretches of land, but he appears to find his living rather on their borders than in them. The tree and bamboo partridges like cover, but it is the cover of the jungle rather than of the forest. They feed, as pheasants do, morning and evening. About noon they like to be near water for their temperate sip, after which a sunny bank with feathery grass is a great attraction for the siesta which so many birds love. It is this fact which makes afternoon shooting so much more productive than that of the morn. I once saw a pointer draw so close to a drowsy partridge that he finally made a dash and secured her without a shot's being fired, the bird being in perfect health and feather. They are fully alive, however, to all dangers when their little ones need protection. Then woe betide crow, or cat, or even hawk which ventures near.

I may, perhaps, be pardoned for adding one more to the stories of bird affection when young are endangered. The incident happened to myself in 1902 when I was on leave in England. I was sauntering along a green country lane in Cheshire one summer day, when from the long grass by the side of the track there went up with a whirr two partridges. A moment after, the female was back over the hedge and on the path with all the appearance of having a broken wing! The deception was, however, a little "too thin" for so old a bird as myself, and instead of trying to catch the wily dame, I stood and watched her. She had made a lame attempt at running from me, but this waiting and watching brought her back. Two or three times she came near and retired, her wing all the while trailing on the ground. Then, to see what she would do, I make great pretence at looking for the young ones in the grass. This was too much. She came running up almost to my feet, and if there ever were a mute appeal to human being to desist from evil, it was made then. At this juncture the cock-bird returned. He perhaps would have attacked, if the searching had been persisted in, for there are many instances known of this having been done. But I had caused alarm enough and gave up the pretended attempt after the young to make a more real one after the parents. This, of course, was what they wanted, and after a run of twenty or thirty yards they both took wing and were

off over the hedge with—one could almost swear to this—a very merry twinkle in their eyes.

As a boy, and somewhat given to trapping birds, I once captured a partridge which had been foraging in my grandmother's garden. With a true-bred country boy's horror of poaching—and this being only one step removed from it—all kinds of penalties began to float through my mind. The fate that had overtaken certain sport-loving villagers loomed large, with a visit to the magistrates, seven miles off, and, who knows? the county gaol afterwards perhaps. So the matter was confided, with no little trepidation, to the granny. She promised to be as secret as the grave, and a certain very nice roast that same day removed all corporeal traces of the crime. People laugh at or denounce game laws such as those of England, but they have their good side. I have seen two or three times as many game and other birds in 400 miles of English travel as close watching showed in 4,000 miles in America. Possibly the fact that the Transatlantic journeys were taken during November and December may have accounted for much of the scarcity, the migrants having gone. But the fact remains that, as compared with England, some parts at any rate of the United States are almost birdless. I was told in Washington that idle negroes were mainly to blame for it. Personally I came to the conclusion that the law was more to blame than the negroes.

Before leaving the partridge altogether one would like to have told of his wonderful charm as a pet. Many have been tamed, and their owners have been enthusiastic in their praise. That, however, was not in China.

Chapter XXVIII.

PHEASANTS.

I know of no bird which tempts ornithologists deeper into "The Encyclopædia Britannica" and similar weighty tomes than the pheasant, the Phasian bird of the sporting Romans. Men delight to wander back to old classical days, to meander with the Phasis river through the meads of Colchis, and so pass from the Caucasus Mountains across the plains of Asia Minor to the shores of the Black Sea; for here, so far as they knew, was the original home of the beautiful birds to which the Phasis gave its name. Then come pages and chapters of history telling of the early days when the pheasant was introduced into Western Europe and so reached England. There is no need for us to add to the army of chroniclers: our object is rather chit-chat than history of the encyclopædic order. Besides, we are in China, and in a part of China in which *Phasianus Colchicus*, the bird which we now somewhat arrogantly call the English pheasant, does not exist, having yielded place this side the ninetieth degree of east longitude, say the meridian of Calcutta, to its first cousin *P. torquatus*, the gentlemanly bird with the clean white collar.

No fewer than 23 species of the pheasant family are known to China and its immediate neighbours. It is true that to sportsmen the word "pheasant" means, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, *P. torquatus*, but such is the interest taken in this king of sporting birds that the veriest "griffin" is keen to know not only all that can be told about that particular species, but all the family besides, especially if there is the slightest chance that wanderings in China may bring him face to face with them. And as railway construction proceeds, this chance will steadily improve. We shall, therefore, before indulging in any further remarks on the birds already so well known, proceed to mention, with a few necessary comments, the more important species within Celestial borders. There are the so-called "Blood Pheasants" for example (*Ithagenes*), represented in Tibet, and probably west Szechwan by *I. Geoffroyi*, a bird which is more a frequenter of trees than the ordinary pheasant is. The name suggests red in the plumage, and it is indeed because of

the predominance of this colour that the name is given. Another species of the same genus is *I. Sinensis*, which is very plentiful somewhat farther north, in Shensi, etc. where it loves the shelter of bamboos especially if found on the hillsides. Harking back to the south again, we come to Yunnan and S.W. China generally, and there we light upon a bird which though closely allied to the pheasants is not really one, *Pavo muticus*, the Burmese pea-fowl, with the gorgeous plumage, crest, tail, eyes, and all. Then there are the monals—genus *Lophophorus*—of which one writer says, "There are few sights more striking, where birds are concerned, than that of a grand old cock (of this kind) shooting out horizontally from the hillside just below one, glittering and flashing in the golden sunlight, a gigantic rainbow-tinted gem, and then dropping, stone-like, with closed wings into the abyss below." It is represented in China by the *L. Lhuysii* of Szechwan, Yunnan, and Kweichow. So-called "eared pheasants" are represented by three species. The first of these is *Crossoptilum Manchuricum*, a gentle, sociable bird found on the hills of Pechili and in other parts of N. China. Hardy enough to bear the cold of a northern climate, these birds cannot boast of much of the gorgeousness lavished on their cousins. They are, in fact, somewhat dowdy in comparison, black, brown, and dirty white forming the protective covering with which Nature has supplied them. *C. Tibetanum* is entirely white except for the top of the head. Here again in all probability the great artist had good reason for showing the white feather in its literal sense. The third species, *C. auritum*, of western China generally is drawn upon by Chinese mandarins for feathers for their official hats. Of the genus *Pucrasia*, the crested pheasants, Père David describes two species. *P. Xanthospila*, found living in pairs or singly in north-western China and brought regularly to the Peking market, an excellent game bird, and *P. Darwini* from the two provinces directly south of us, Chekiang and Fukien.

Properly speaking, the golden pheasant, to which we now come, is not one of the true pheasants, and is not scientifically included with them but with the Reeves and some others in the genus *Thaumalea* or *Chrysolophus*. *T. picta* or *C. picta* is the choice allowed us in the case of the classical name of that extremely beautiful Chinese bird. Though unknown in this neighbourhood, the golden pheasant is very widely distributed, being met with from S. W. China right across to Korea or, as I suppose we should now call it, Chosen. The golden crest and back, the brilliant red of the breast and under parts, and the artistically mottled browns of the superb tail of this species mark it out even from amongst its relatives as a bird of striking beauty. The hens, as is the case with

all the pheasants, except when a female takes her lord's colouring, as occasionally happens, are far less conspicuous, necessarily, since they have the incubation work to do, and must not betray either themselves or their nests. The male can at will erect his neck covering into a most remarkable ruff, doubtless useful in a threefold manner, to attract his lady love, to scare his rivals, and to provide some protection when fights take place. Another of the genus, *T. Amherstiae*, or *C. Amherstiae*, was named in honour of Lady Amherst. It is in some ways even more striking than its golden relative. Its tail feathers are something like three feet in length, and broader than those of most other pheasants. Head, mantle, scapulars, and chest are a dark bronze green, but there is a long crest of blood red. A cape of pure white is margined and barred across the middle with black, glossed with steel blue. Rump and lower parts are buff, barred with dark green. The bird is a native of Tibet and western China, and is quite hardy.

The silver pheasant is of another genus still, and is called by Père David *Euplocamus Nycthemerus*. Fukien and S. W. China form its chief habitat. It derives its common name from the white back and tail. There is a rather long crest of purplish black feathers, and the white ground of the back is marked feather by feather with dark converging lines. All the under parts are dark, the bird thus sharing with the golden plover a not common distinction in this respect. As a specimen in the Shanghai Museum shows, the silver pheasant is one of the most strongly built of the whole family. As a fighter it is said to be the equal of a game cock. There is another species of the same genus found in Formosa and known as *E. Swinhoii*.

The tragopans have two representatives, *Ceriornis Temminckii* and *C. Caboti*. The different varieties of this genus vary greatly in colour, but are alike in one respect, their more or less striking adornment by means of spots on their plumage. They have also "horns" which account for one of their popular titles, horned pheasants. In the breeding season the throat of the male is covered with a loose, brightly coloured bib or lappet which hangs down several inches in time of passion, but is much less conspicuous during the winter. *C. Temminckii*, or Temminck's tragopan, is as well known a game bird in the S.W. provinces of China as Cabot's is in the S.E. districts, where it loves to make its home on close covered hill-sides.

One more relative of the great pheasant family and we shall have come to the end of our list. This is the only representative described by David of the highly important genus *Gallus*, or game fowls. He names it *G. ferrugineus*.

It is the Chinese representative of the red jungle fowl, *G. Bankiva*, of which one needs but to see a picture to be satisfied at once of its relationship to our barn-door breeds. It is common in Cochin China, is known in Hainan and, I believe, in the Philippines. Our game cock is perhaps its closest domesticated relative.

If no other purpose has been served by the preceding notes on China's pheasants, they will have proved to demonstration that few, if any, lands can boast of any finer or wider selection. China is so immense, her physical geography presents such contrasts, and her latitude and longitude are both so extensive that it is but natural that her varied climate should agree with the needs of an equally varied selection of birds. India is solely torrid; Europe is entirely temperate; much of Siberia is quite arctic. At various times in the year, and in various parts of the country China can boast of all these and all their connecting links. She is torrid enough during July and August to suit a salamander. In January and February her northern districts are hyperborean. During those same months her central and southern parts vary from the mildness of a winter in Torbay to the sub-tropical warmth of Kwangtung and Hainan. Naturally such differences suit here one, there another of the great gallinacean family, and hence the richness of this particular branch of Chinese fauna. With greater facilities for travel, we shall more and more appreciate this marvellous wealth.

Chapter XXIX.

PHEASANTS.—*(Continued.)*

The true pheasants are proportionally as well represented in China as the family in general. We have Reeves's and Elliot's pheasants, *Phasianus decollatus*, *P. Sladeni*, the Formosan pheasant, and our ever welcome and well known bird, *P. Torquatus*. A few words respecting each of these will not be out of place, and we will take them in the order given.

P. Reevesii, or the Reeves's pheasant, is in some respects the gem of the genus. When it is remembered that our ordinary pheasant rarely reaches a total length of three feet notwithstanding its fairly liberal allowance of tail, it will at once be seen that the Reeves with an extreme length of eight feet or more must be a noticeable bird. It is mainly in the tail that the difference lies. Only the two central feathers have this unusual length, the others being comparable in that respect with those of the common species. But it is not in measurement only that the Reeves pheasant deserves attention. He is a strikingly handsome bird. Head all white but for a patch of scarlet round the eye, and a black line leading to the poll, and there joining a glossy gorget of the same colour. The back is resplendent in yellow feathers with rich velvety black edgings. The primaries and wing coverts suggest the tints of the common pheasant, though there are some snowy white markings on the under parts mingled with the same rich black which adorns the back. The tail with its groundwork is beautifully barred with tints of light and dark brown. It is a pity that one has first of all to get amongst the hills of N. W. China, Szechwan, or the high border lands adjoining the Himalayas before one can meet with so charming a creature. There it loves the hill-sides, where cover is abundant. Like other pheasants, *P. Reevesii* is a polygamous bird, and consequently pugnacious. Readers of old works on ornitholgy should remember that he is variously described therein as *P. superbus*, *P. veneratus*, or the barred-tailed pheasant. There is a specimen in the Shanghai Museum, but the best I have ever seen were in Mr. Styan's collection once exhibited in Shanghai many years ago. He had some excellent skins.

Elliot's pheasant (*P. Ellioti*) was discovered in 1872 by the late Consul Swinhoe in the province of Chekiang, and by Père David during the following year in Fukien. The latter sent a living specimen to the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. The bird does not seem to be at all common. It is of a wild nature, migrating at times from one district to another, and, like the silver pheasant with which it is sometimes found, loves the cover of wooded hills. There is a specimen in the Shanghai Museum. Its total length is something less than that of the ordinary pheasant.

For the "Pheasant without a Collar" (*P. decollatus*) we have to go to Shensi and then south-west to Szechwan, Kweichow, Yunnan, and farther westward still towards Central Asia. It is somewhat smaller than our "collared" bird, and differs from it in several respects in plumage, etc., but in some of the districts named it completely takes the place of the finer bird. A specimen may be seen in the Museum.

Phasianus Sladeni is also known as *P. elegans*. I have never seen a specimen, unless possibly a forgotten one in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. In China it is confined to west Szechwan and Yunnan, and there, according to Père David, at a height of more than 4,500 ft. It is only about two-thirds the length of the common pheasant.

The Formosan pheasant (*P. Formosanus*) has a collar but is otherwise specifically different from its cousin *Torquatus*, and is differently marked in a variety of ways. The Japanese pheasant known as *P. versicolor*, is remarkable for its green tints.

We now come to our common but much admired friend, to many known especially as the China pheasant, the dainty gentleman of our up-country search, *P. Torquatus* of the white collar. It has already been remarked that *P. colchicus*, the pheasant of the western lands, is practically shut off from us by the meridian of Calcutta. West of that he rules, east of it the pheasant world is divided as we have seen amongst a gorgeous variety of remarkably handsome birds. But commonest of all these, and certainly not the least beautiful, is our well known friend, the bird which early residents "in the country" about Shanghai, that is to say near where the Honan Road runs now, used to see in the early mornings feeding on the lawn!

People who only know pheasants as they are brought from the market or exhibited in cabinets have but a very partial idea of their true beauty. That can be realized only when a perfect specimen can be seen at its best in its own natural surroundings. It takes but an hour or two after death for much of the glory to disappear. In England, where preserved pheasants are almost as tame as barn-door fowls, there is little

difficulty in getting close enough to revel in the displayed beauties of perhaps a score of cocks. It is different out here. Only once have I been able to watch at close quarters the movements of a full-grown cock-pheasant in his prime. I was just crossing a reed-covered ditch, once upon a time in mid-winter, when I saw flying straight towards me a fine male bird. As luck would have it, he alighted within a yard or two of me, and for several minutes I had the pleasure of watching his display. Why he should have chosen that particular moment to strut about, backward and forward, in the golden sunshine, I cannot tell, but there he was, all unconscious of my presence, "showing off." There might have been a hen in the neighbourhood, but the time was Christmas time, and if courting was in progress it was either decidedly late or preternaturally early. A fully complete description of such a bird is as unnecessary as it is impossible. Here there will be no attempt at it. Suffice it to say that five minutes' of such pleasure is worth days of hard walking over hill and dale, through copse and cover. A slight movement on my part, and I was self-betrayed. The astonishment which my visitor displayed when he found a "foreign devil" close to him was only equalled by his hurry to get off into the next province. In part payment for his performance the charge of "villainous saltpetre" which might otherwise have gone after him was withheld. But when birds were plentiful it used to be by no means difficult to get distant views of pheasants feeding in the early morning or evening up-country, and then with a good glass there was ample opportunity for study without alarm.

Seen in a coloured picture or preserved in a museum, and away from its natural environment, it would seem utterly impossible for a male pheasant to hide himself amongst a few tufts of dead winter grass. But, as every sportsman knows to his loss, not only is hiding possible, but it seems as easy and complete as if the earth had opened and swallowed up the quarry he is so anxious to retrieve. A little explanation will help in some small degree to show how this is. The tints of the pheasant contain red, blue, black, green, various shades of brown, and yellow. Now all these except the black and blue are to be found in the cover which the bird frequents. The browns and yellows are plentiful enough amongst the blades of grass and straw. The reds are no less common in stalks and ground leaves, the greens fit in amongst those hardy plants which defy frost and cold alike, whilst the blacks and dark blues serve to represent the shadows and dark places between the stalks and under the leaves of the plants. My own experience in this, which has extended over nearly half a century, is centred in one incident. I had dropped a

cock which ran to cover though hard hit. Quite half an hour was spent in looking for him, when finally as in a flash, his tail was seen. After that the wonder was how he had been overlooked: yet another pair of eyes called up for the sake of experiment was unable to discover the bird even when the looker was assured it was within a few feet of his nose! On Christmas Day, 1908, I saw a hen pheasant running across the Shanghai Recreation Club ground. She took shelter by the little creek there, but, though there was absolutely no grass cover, two of us were unable to find her though we looked carefully for some time. Our common pheasant is to be met with from Manchuria to Canton. Wherever he can find suitable cover and opportunity enough to permit of broods' being safely raised, there he seems to thrive. Conditions throughout so many degrees of latitude vary immensely, but the pheasant is adaptable, and makes the best of them all. What he cannot bear up against, what indeed no bird can exist under, is persecution and murder during the breeding season. It is nothing short of crime to kill these birds during the months from February to October. Yet there are people who not only do it but glory in it. We had a French sportsman in Shanghai once, M. Déchaud of the Messageries Maritimes, who prohibited the taking of game on board the French mails during the close season, but his truly admirable example has not always been followed, and the result has been a steady decline in the number of pheasants in this part of China and as far up the river as Nanking and Wuhu. The Chinese Government should see to it. The Shanghai Municipal Council does something, but even here greater strictness should be observed, for no mercy should be shown to the purveyor or the consumer of forbidden game. Preservation is necessary to prevent extinction.

Chapter XXX.

PHEASANTS.—*(Concluded.)*

The largest bag of pheasants recorded in Mr. Wade's book, "With Boat and Gun in the Yangtze Valley," is the Ewo bag of 1889, when out of a total of 2,049 head there were 1,801 pheasants. These, of course, were got in the ordinary China fashion over dogs, out of cover, and in the fields. Nothing was attempted in the form of driving, except such ordinary beating of bamboos as can be done by a few coolies. There were six guns, but only four shot continuously, and the number of shooting days was twenty-three. For other information respecting the sportsmen of bygone days and the bags they got, together with everything else in the way of sporting knowledge required in this part of the world, the reader may turn with confidence to the book above named.

My own experience has been with smaller parties and not at the best time of year. The cream of the shooting is to be got perhaps a little before Christmas. A great deal depends on the condition of the crops. My best time amongst the long tails happened one year after Christmas in a piece of country along the Grand Canal between Kahshing and Soochow, where at ordinary times one rarely found anything. On this occasion, however, for some reason or other, a few patches of paddy had been left, the only ones apparently in the whole district, and to them pheasants from far and near had been attracted. In a couple of hours before sunset and another couple of hours next morning twenty-five birds were collected to a single gun. With a party directed with some regard to strategy there might have been a very good bag made on that occasion, for pheasants were as plentiful as one could remember them within a dozen years after the end of the Taiping rebellion. Then whole bouquets of birds might be put up out of favourite pieces of cover, reeds, bamboos, or what not. In the morning they might be seen running ahead of sportsmen till they had reached what they thought a safe distance to rise, or disappeared altogether in cover. Shooting was comparatively easy in those days, and little was looked at but pheasants, deer, hares, pig, and such water-fowl as got up from creeks and ponds. Native hunters were few and far between, and there was not the market demand there is now.

Since pheasants feed in the early mornings and evenings, it follows that the best shooting is not to be got at those times but during the middle part of the day when, after a satisfactory breakfast—and pheasants have quite as good an appetite as other birds—they are lying up for the siesta. Sometimes cocks and hens go up together, but more often they are found separately. Cocks, particularly if alone, seem to have a special liking for little clumps of young bamboos: hens, on the contrary, love a warm grassy bank such as might otherwise contain quails. But it is not wise to attempt too exactly to define likely places, for the pheasants at times seem ubiquitous, and will rise from the middle of an open field as readily as from the most tempting cover. In common with partridges they appear to like a drink of water during the heat of the day. It will not, of course, be news to the experienced sport when he hears that the pheasant swims well. That, however, is a fact at which the beginner may be surprised. I have seen on two or three occasions winged birds try to save themselves by swimming across creeks, when their motion is similar to that of the moor-hen, the head going backward and forward in time with the movement of the feet. Some men declare that they dive. All that I can say with confidence respecting that is that, if they do, the fact accounts for the loss of two or three birds that I can remember, one no later than last season.

Their running powers are well known. A hard chase after an old cock is not a bad test of the wind of the sportsman without a retriever. Once it was my fortune to lose a fine bird notwithstanding the fact that I had a pointer. She was old, however, and as the bird had a good start she actually got off to cover a good seven hundred yards away, the dog giving up the chase. On two occasions our winter visitors, the so-called "Bromley" kite (a corruption of "Brahminy"), have unintentionally retrieved birds for me, or rather have shown where they were by their persistent attack on them. When unhurt, a cock pheasant thinks nothing of the swoop of these gentry, but it is otherwise when he has been hard hit.

Pheasants are seldom found during the daytime on trees. One may see them on a well-preserved ground in England and now and then in China flying up on to the lower branches when the dusk has come, and then going higher till they have found what they consider a safe and comfortable perch for the night. Poachers, of course, know all this, and sometimes before roosting time has arrived have taken their stations from which unseen to watch the exact positions they mean to raid. But as a rule pheasants once off the perch remain on the ground till the time for rest has come round once more. Only on one occasion can I remember putting pheasants

out of a tree in the open. This was in the Bing-Wu district, quite open country, and without any available cover near at hand, an explanation, doubtless, of the use made of a big evergreen tree, an ilex, if I remember rightly. Three or four went away from the top of this tree almost altogether, then another, and finally a fine young cock which had foolishly remained a little too long and was brought to bag.

It would be both interesting and instructive to have the opinion of a few typical Chinese farmers respecting the damage done to their crops by pheasants. That they do most unquestionably eat an immense amount of grain when they get the chance is certain, and it is probably this fact which enables country people to look on with indifference, if not approval, when the marauders are shot. They are always willing to tell where they believe pheasants are to be found, and in case of lost birds will give the direction in which they were seen to go, though to the unsophisticated foreigner a reply like "flown towards the west" is not very enlightening. Whether the Chinese recognize the counter-balancing fact that game is responsible for the destruction of vast numbers of wire-worms and other enemies to the farmer, I cannot say. Probably the majority of the country people are sufficiently Buddhistic to have at least a little objection to the taking of life and that is doubtless one reason why multitudes of birds may at times be found in thickly populated districts. Gunpowder, too, is dear, and the primitive gingal even dearer, and hence few of the ordinary peasantry take to sport of any sort.

Men differ in their opinion as to the best size shot to use for pheasants but the variety in China shooting has been one cause of the discovery of wide possibilities. Out after snipe, for example, with No. 9 and No. 8 in the right and left barrels respectively, (this is an experience of my own) a pheasant goes up at convenient range and comes down to the smaller number. That is the extreme in one direction. The other occurred when waterfowl were expected, and No. 1 was the charge. But in ordinary cases the choice seems to range between Nos. 6 and 4. I had particularly good practice one year with some Ballistite No. 6 cartridges. That seems to serve very well, and if the powder is straight does for almost anything except geese.

With the close of the China New Year, pheasant shooting should absolutely cease. It might be better were the date advanced a little, but that is impossible when we remember that China New holidays rank as one of the principal up-country seasons of the year. But once that is done with the stricter the law is the better. Not many years ago there was some fear that the China pheasant would follow the American bison, and be known only in a few closely protected

preserves, and some stuffed specimens in museums. The wretches who supply the millinery market were the middlemen in this nefarious traffic. But as the result of a public meeting of protest in Shanghai, and some strong representations in the right native quarters, the export was stopped altogether, and *Phasianus Torquatus* was left to himself for the summer except for the attentions of the purveyor for illicit markets. That the China pheasant can stand a good deal of persecution is certain. He has no attentive keeper to bring him his breakfast and supper every day. What he eats he has to forage for, and hence soon learns that independence of action which belongs to all truly wild life. The mother bird is careless at times where she makes her nest. I found nine eggs once quite uncovered out in the middle of a field which was already being prepared for rice. Mr. R. W. Little of "The N.-C. Daily News" tried to get them hatched out, but the experiment failed. Still we have Mr. Wade's assurance that though pheasants may not be found in the collected numbers once so common, their ranks are only apparently thinner, dispersion accounting for the seeming scarcity. In all probability this is one of the true explanations of the smallness of modern bags. What the others are may be surmised by shooters themselves. But it is satisfactory to know that there is at present no reason to fear the killing out of the China pheasant. He is being introduced on a large scale into Vancouver and British Columbia, about 1,000 birds having been turned down there during this present year. That the pheasant can stand the winter there is shown by its power to bear the cold of northern China, and I have myself seen our China bird in fine fettle during the winter in Oregon.

Chapter XXXI.

GULLS.

"How many things," says Shakespeare, "by season seasoned are to their true praise and right perfection." There are times when we scarcely look at gull: there are others when we cannot; for in this part of the world gulls as a rule disappear with the heat and come back with the cool. At the first touch of red or yellow on the new leaves they know it is time to seek their winter haunts, and so the coast ports of China get their welcome share of these very interesting visitors from October onwards. There are more than twenty kinds of them to be found in China waters, some extremely common, others rare. Some are practically identical with the same birds in English waters; others vary to some extent. Gulls, as a rule, with a few very marked exceptions, are widely spread. The ease of their flight, their swimming power, and their ability to make a living ashore if need be, mark them out as being fitted for survival. They are nearly omnivorous. Fish, floating refuse, molluscs, worms, flesh and other things seem equally welcome. One of the closest assemblages of gulls it ever fell to my lot to see was some years ago when leaving Cork harbour on an Atlantic liner which was just disposing of its daily sweepings by throwing them overboard. Doubtless amongst the rubbish were pieces of cheese of which—Gorgonzola for preference, I believe—gulls are inordinately fond. To the farmer, they are, during the ploughing season, almost as useful as the rook, for they follow the plough and snap up whatever in the shape of wireworm, or other vermiform food, may be exposed. Feeding the gull is a favourite pastime from London bridges, and we sometimes see it done from the Garden Bridge in Shanghai. Then comes the chance for budding airmen to take note of the perfection of nature's methods in utilizing air currents and overcoming their difficulties. That, however, is perhaps best seen at sea when, seated on the poop on a fine, sunny, breezy day, one may for hours watch the marvellous means of progression possessed by these birds. For several minutes at a time I have watched a single bird keep up with a vessel running at from twelve to fourteen knots, no feather moving

no flap of wing, no flick of tail, the height above the vessel remaining practically constant all the time. I imagine that this is possible only when the wind suits in every way, in force as well as in direction. But it is a sight which never ceases to interest the thoughtful, and now that moving pictures of animal movements are becoming so perfect, it should soon be demonstrated that there is as much of instruction in it as of interest.

We have two names in English for this class of birds, gulls and mews. Both have their counterpart in French, *Goéland* and *Mouette*, and both are borrowed from older sources, "gull" from the welsh "gwylan," and "mew" from an older Norse or Icelandic name. The classical name of the genus is *Larus*, but this, according to the customary variety of views amongst "authorities," is richly diversified.

Larus Canus, the hoary white gull, is our commonest kind. He is a fine big bird when at his maximum growth and strength, quite a foot and a half long. Ages of immunity from persecution—except by Sunday trippers and the like—have made him bold. He shuns man no more than the rook does. On the contrary he cultivates his acquaintance, and is willing on the smallest encouragement to be friendly, not to say intimate. On such occasions one can sit and admire his beauties to the full. They consist in the first place of the immaculate purity of his white feathers. If it is possible for anything to be whiter than snow it is the covering of the head, breast, and lower parts of the common gull. The ivory gull has more of this spotless purity even than its cousin, but I have not seen the ivory gull in these waters. Nature has provided, as she always does, a note or two of difference and contrast in the plumage of all the gulls. In *Larus Canus* these consist of a very delicate shade of grey-blue on the back, whilst the wing primaries are black tipped with white. Some species change considerably in the breeding season, donning, some of them, a dark cap for the time being. The young too, until they have developed adult plumage, are very differently marked from their parents. The only one I ever shot, many years ago now, was killed in the belief that it was an entirely new variety. At the Museum it was discovered to be simply an immature specimen of a very common kind.

L. Ridibundus, the black-headed gull, is almost as common on inland waters as it is near the sea. Except for the black cap, the markings of this are not very different from those of the last. The beak, however, is red, whilst that of the common gull is yellowish. The feet and legs, too, of *Ridibundus* are red, not the dark, almost black colour of those of *Canus*. In some parts of England the eggs of this

and other varieties are taken in great numbers. So long as this is done systematically and with due attention to the demands of nature, there is here just as legitimate a source of income as there is from the possession of an immense fowl-house. As many as forty-four thousand eggs have been taken from "gulleries" on one estate, and yet so carefully is this robbery achieved that there is no diminution in the number of birds. So expert on the wing are the black-headed gulls that they are able to catch insects in the air.

The Eastern Herring Gull—*L. occidentalis*—is similar to a very common kind in England to wit, *L. argentatus*, which is an even finer bird than the common gull, and measures at its very best about two feet. As its name implies, it is a follower of the shoals of fish upon which much of its food depends. When engaged in this occupation its powers of flight, so far as the exhibition of control is concerned, are seen at their very best. The steady progress under wing power or by means of air currents is when necessary suspended on the instant. Something below has attracted attention. If there is no question as to the presence of prey, the downward dart is instantaneous and usually effective. If there is doubt, there is a moment's hovering to make sure, and then the dive or the onward flight as the case may be. There may be hundreds and thousands of hungry birds collected within so small a space that to all appearance collisions must be frequent, and at the speed used dangerous, if not fatal, but nobody ever sees anything of the kind. Over, or under, to one side or the other, does the "automatic steering gear" carry each bird, a marvel of simple effectiveness not a whit less wonderful than the more evident flying mechanism.

A variety of this species is *L. Cachinnans*, the laughing gull, common during the cool season along the coasts of China. At that time one sees them inland so far as North Manchuria, and even farther on towards the centre of Southern Siberia, wherever conditions are favourable. The bird has the red beak and legs and the black cap of a species above described. Passengers *via* the Mediterranean may see it in great numbers at the proper season. The nest of the laughing gull is placed in some marshy situation, as is that of some other kinds, whilst others again keep to the bare coast, and deposit their eggs on sand or rocks. The nest of the laughing gull is made of dry grass and sea-weeds.

Other species referred to by Père David are *L. Niveus*, the snow-white gull, *L. Crassirostris*, the thick billed gull, *L. Brunneicephalus*, the brown-headed, and *Chroicocephalus Saundersi*, or the Saunders Gull.

So far, no mention has been made of the aggressive nature of certain of the gull family, but so important a trait

must not be allowed to pass unnoticed. Some of the larger gulls are rank robbers, chasing and depriving smaller birds of the prey they have laboured to procure for themselves. There is a good deal of human nature in birds! In Scotland and other northern countries, where they are to be found when the young of animals are abundant, it is well known that gulls are not infrequently responsible for the destruction of a good many of these. Lambs, for example, especially if at all weakly, they will combine to overwhelm, the first onslaught being made on the eyes. Sometimes other birds are attacked, killed, and eaten, the voracious gull taking on himself the *rôle* of the raptores proper. In all probability, however, these excursions into uncommon larders are due to one of two causes—scarcity of the more natural food, or inability on the part of the bird to capture it. We may compare gulls with ordinary beasts of prey, which, as Kipling has so characteristically pourtrayed in his Jungle Stories, turn aside from their ordinary habits under compulsion of hunger. In times of scarcity, tigers descend to very low hunting indeed. When toothless and decrepit they are man-eaters. So with birds. They keep their proper "form" as long as that is possible, but when hunger comes, and bird hunger must be far more difficult to bear than human, they stick at nothing. So there is some excuse even for a lamb-killing gull.

Chapter XXXII.

TERNS.

Before this chapter is closed I have a story to tell, a story of terns, one which though not new is not very widely known, and yet is so full of pathos that it alone would have warranted the devotion of a page or two to the Swallows of the Sea. But the terns have many other claims to our attention. Their grace, their similarity when on the wing to the swallows of the English summer, the simplicity yet beauty of their plumage, and the fact that they may often be seen when other birds are absent or hidden, all these things demand that they should have justice done to them in these pages. Of the same great family as the gulls, they belong to another genus, the true terns being known under the classical name of *Sterna*, of which the derivation is doubtful.

We will look at the most common first. That is *Sterna fluviatilis*, or *Sterna hirundo*, the "tern-swallow" of our estuaries and coasts. A foot to fourteen inches is about his length when full grown, but a good deal of this is due to a fairly long beak of reddish yellow and a forked tail of great delicacy in point. In marking, the common tern is not unlike the gull, having the same pure white breast and under parts, and a similar greyish-blue, though lighter in some cases, on the back. He wears a black cap which fits exactly along the centre transverse line of the eye, and his feet and legs are a dull ruddy colour. Such are the simple markings of this interesting bird, but they form a picture that is at once chaste and striking. In the cool season of the year terns may be found in suitable localities in considerable numbers, hawking over the water for fish, insects, or other food.

S. Minuta, or *S. Sinensis*, as Père David calls it, is known to Englishmen as the lesser tern. In marking it is much the same as its bigger cousin, but the primaries are darker and there is a white splash from the root of the beak extending over the eye, and thus lighting up the head considerably. The lesser tern reaches only some eight or nine inches in length, and in order to show how much of its substance is "feathers and show" it may be mentioned that its total weight is only about 2 oz. It was once my good fortune to fall in with a flock of them hunting

over a piece of flooded land, in the year, if I remember rightly, when so many villagers were drowned out on the Pootung side. I was after snipe at the time, and gave up that chase to watch the evolutions of these true swallows of the sea. One was brought home for the Museum. They showed little or no sign of fear, doubtless for the reason that they are so seldom interfered with. Who on ordinary occasions would shoot swallows whether on sea or land?

Of the marsh variety of terns David mentions two species as well known in the east. One of these *Haliplana Anaestheta*, the eastern representative of *S. Antarctica*, and the other *H. fuliginosa*, the sooty tern, so called from the dark colour of its plumage which, with the exception of the white splash over the eye, is from the crown of the head to the tip of the tail a dull sooty black on back and wings. The under parts are as pure a white as that of the common tern, and look even whiter in contrast against the sombre tints above. Feet, legs, and bill are all of the sooty tinge. These are true sea birds, and may be met with hundreds of miles from any shore. Naturally their diet is more exclusively fishy than that of the others.

Far more striking in appearance than either of those yet mentioned is the white-winged tern, *Hydrochelidon leucoptera*. In this the bill, feet and legs are blood red: the head is all a glossy black, so is the back till the tail coverts are reached; these and the tail are white. On the under side the same division of colours holds, the breast and abdomen being black with a tinge of green whilst the ventrices are white. The wings stand out in strong contrast being very light in colour with a grey-blue tinge shading off to white. These are haunters of the land rather than of the sea, and their food is more largely insectivorous. Nine to ten inches is their full length. Another species allied to the last is *H. hybrida*, the so-called whiskered tern. It has the same blood-red bill and lower extremities, but there is no black about it except the cap, which in this species fits down right to the lower edge of the eye. For the rest both back and breast are of a somewhat duller blue grey than is the case with the others, the under wing coverts and ventrices being white. It is a little longer than *H. hybrida*. Both are but rare visitors to Great Britain, preferring as a rule lower latitudes.

S. Caspia is considerably larger than either of the birds yet mentioned, reaching at times to a length of from twenty to twenty-two inches. It differs very slightly also from the rest in marking. Its bill is a bright blood red with some white longitudinal markings on it. There is the black cap, this time with a curve down round the eye. The feet and

legs are black, and the wing feathers grow darker as they approach their extremities. Otherwise the markings of the common tern and this are very similar. These also are more given to the sea, are always on the wing, flying, as is the nature of their tribe, with the utmost tirelessness and ease. They seize their prey on or close to the surface, never actually diving for it. The Caspian variety is a far shyer bird than most of the others, is not easily approached, and seems to be constantly on the watch for anything that might prove inimical. In common with the family as a rule, terns pass through various changes in plumage according to the seasons.

S. Longipennis, the long-winged or swift tern, needs little description. Its chief distinction is in the length of its primary and tail feathers, which mark it out as swift amongst the swift, light-winged where all are light-winged. The tips of the primaries extend till they are immediately above the ends of the long and deeply forked tail. It would be interesting to know what pace a swift-tern could get up were a bird of prey, say a noddy, after it.

A line about the noddy, *Anous Stolidus*, and these notes must come to a close. Except for a light coloured crown to his head, the noddy is of a dark chocolate brown turning in the primaries almost to black. His indifference to approaching strangers is responsible for his name of the "foolish one"—*stolidus*. Many have been caught by hand on board ships at sea. The noddy is as often known under the still more characteristic name of "Booby." He is more at home on sea than on land. Noddy's eggs, like those of some other terns, are considered very good eating. Like gulls, some nest on sand or rocks, others amongst the marshes. Some very beautiful photographs of terns taken from life recently appeared in that most interesting weekly "Country Life."

It has already fallen to my lot to tell one story of maternal love as shown by a partridge. One delights to have such an opportunity when the incident has been a personal experience. But all such exhibitions by birds may be referred by the skeptical to instinct, and I am a firm believer in something more than instinct in many animals other than man. It must not be forgotten that even man himself under stress of unusual danger falls back on instincts pure and simple. Tumbling into deep water, for example, when he cannot swim, his reason vanishes, and he becomes once more what his ancestors were before reason had begun, that is to say an arboreal animal accustomed to escape danger by swinging himself higher and higher on the branches of the trees on which he dwelt. Drowning, his hands instinctively go up to branches which are not there! And as man may descend from reason to instinct, so may the lower animals rise at times from instinct to reason.

Witness my story, or rather the story of Thomas Edward, the Scotch naturalist. Edward tells in his simple inimitable style of watching a party of Pickietars (Terns, *S. hirundo*), hoping some might come within reach and be added to his collection. He dwells on the beauty of the scene, the indefatigable evolutions of the terns in their search for food, now darting down on their finny prey, now soaring aloft again, hovering on kestrel wing when in doubt, and then dropping like a plummet, to emerge from the surface with a catch. Just after such a dip, the chance came for a shot, and the bird, winged, fell into the water. His cries brought his companions up in hot haste. The wounded one was slowly drifting ashore where Edward hoped to get it. He must tell the rest in his own words: "Whilst matters were in this position, I beheld to my utter astonishment and surprise, two of the unwounded terns take hold of their disabled comrade, one at each wing, lift him out of the water, and bear him out seawards. They were followed by two other birds. After being carried about six or seven yards, he was gently let down again, when he was taken up by the two who had hitherto been inactive. In this way they continued to carry him alternately, until they had conveyed him to a rock at a considerable distance, upon which they landed him in safety. Having recovered my self-possession, I made toward the rock, wishing to obtain the prize which had been so unceremoniously snatched from my grasp. I was observed, however, by the terns: and instead of four, I had in a short time a whole swarm about me. On my near approach to the rock, I once more beheld two of them take hold of the wounded bird as they had done already, and bear him out to sea in triumph, far beyond my reach. This, had I been so inclined, I could no doubt have prevented. Under the circumstances, however, my feelings would not permit me, and I willingly allowed them to perform without molestation an act of mercy, and to exhibit an instance of affection, which man himself need not be ashamed to imitate: I was indeed rejoiced at the disappointment which they had occasioned, for they had thereby rendered me witness of a scene which I could scarcely have believed, and which no length of time will efface from my recollection." There speaks a true sportsman and naturalist.

Is there anybody who can read this story to find in it nothing but instinct? If so, one can but be sorry for him. For what have we here but one of the very things on which the Englishman above all others loves to pride himself—power to rise to the occasion, whatever the occasion may be, power to adapt means to ends, to decide promptly what ought to be done and then to do it, though it has *never been*

done before? Those four italicized words contain the whole difference between instinct and reason. They tell a story which to me, is unique. Not that in I think instances of friendly aid amongst birds to be unique On the contrary, I believe there to be a good many such cases though we do not see them. notably such as the dressing of wounds by snipe which has been referred to once before, and of which I have myself seen an example. There is no need to moralize on the story. I does its own moralizing, but I shall be glad if its re-telling in these pages helps to increase the sympathy which ought to exist between man and all his feathered friends.

Chapter XXXIII.

CORMORANTS AND PELICANS.

No wanderer amongst the many waterways of South Kiangsu or other inland parts of China, wherever it is possible for punt to float and fish to swim, will need any introduction to *Phalacrocorax Carbo*, the common Cormorant. He may be glad of a little enlightenment respecting the ugly-looking name, guessing perhaps that it was given to fit the ugly-looking bird. Certainly the cormorant by any other name would smell as sweet. But one part, even of the name, is inscrutable. "Phalacro" in Greek means "bald," and "Corax" is the raven, as everybody knows. But what "carbo" stands for in this connexion is only to be guessed. "Lu ssŭ," the Chinese name, is used loosely for more than one bird of the genus. This cormorant has a cousin better known along the Shantung coast than in this neighbourhood, *P. Pelagicus*, the sea-cormorant. I have spent some time in watching it through glasses as it fished and rested along the rocky side of Liu-kung-tao at Weihaiwei. Needless to say its swimming power is all that could be desired. Its flight is a little heavy perhaps, but is strong, and by no means lacking in speed.

But it is the cormorant of these waters, the cormorant of the rivers and lakes, as well as of the coasts, that is most interesting as well as best known to ordinary men. Essentially fish-eaters, the cormorants are utterly uneatable themselves. More fishy than fish, would be the verdict, probably, of the bold experimenter who should dare to "see what it's like" on the table. The cormorant needs little description. He has no beauty that we should desire him. His covering is dull and altogether lacking in brilliancy. This does not altogether apply to the green cormorant, which, as its name shows, has a distinct tinge, but to the commoner variety, and specially to such as we see under the unpromising conditions visible on a Chinese punt. When wild, cormorants are more attractive than this. With perfect freedom they keep in perfect condition, and what little they have in the way of attractiveness is seen at its best. A sociable family, they may be met with in companies varying from a dozen or two to hundreds or more. If possible they are even more voracious than other birds, which is saying a great deal. One

was shot once by a musket bullet through the throat which not only killed the bird but cut in half a large eel which as yet had been unable to find room in the interior! All birds of the kind gorge themselves with fish after fish till, for the time being, there is absolutely no more space. The young feed from the half digested contents of the parent's gullet, putting their own heads half way down the throat for the purpose. The skin of the neck being very elastic can hold a far larger number of fish than one would think. From the way that tame cormorants balance themselves in the gunnel of a punt one might infer that they would be at home on trees. They are.

> Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
> The middle tree and highest there that grew,
> Sat like a cormorant,

is what Milton tells us of the first approach of the Tempter in Eden. Some kinds breed on low trees near their feeding places, and it is not an uncommon thing to see others standing on low-lying branches or posts over the water whence they will dive after any prey they see passing below. How well they swim is known to all who have watched them either in their natural or domesticated state. But how few people there must be who have any clear conception of their grace once they have disappeared from sight below the surface! Ashore they look almost as clumsy as a goose. They move with no more grace than does the waddling duck. Their flight possesses not the faintest of faint hints to recall the winged symmetry and matchless elegance of the sea-swallow. Once in the water, however, it is seen that they are in their element. As with all divers, their forward parts lie low. The graceful curve of their back, with the little upward turns fore and aft, at the neck and tail that is to say, forms a perfect bow-like arc, there is ample weight of body to make the dive a very rapid one whenever the centre of gravity has been upset by the quick dart of the head and neck below the surface, and literally in a flash they are gone. The term "like a flash" comes from the days when flint-lock fowling pieces with a powder pan were in use. Diving at the flash, cormorants and other such birds usually escaped being shot. But it is not even at the surface of the water that the cormorant is at his best. To see that, one must see him below, and that is a treat as rare as it is astonishing. I shall never forget my one opportunity of watching a band of trained cormorants fish a clear creek. On hundreds of occasions I had seen them go below muddy water and re-appear with their prey. But it is a totally different thing when one can stand on a bank well above, and through the limpid liquid of a crystal stream watch

their evolutions below. What the swallow and the tern can do in the air, the clumsy cormorant can do below the water. He becomes transfigured into a perfect embodiment of grace. He passes through his aqueous environment as if it were ether. The rapidity of his motion makes his plumage, none too well fitting in the air, sit as though every feather had been glued in position and then ironed. He darts; he turns with lightning speed; his long beak, head, and neck explore the recesses of a patch of weeds. Sure enough, there are fish at home. *They* dart, too, here, there, everywhere: but all to no purpose. As well might a screaming blackbird hope to escape the stooping hawk. They are overtaken one by one, not as a terrier overtakes rats to be nipped, killed, and left, but to be held in the capacious beak and throat till nature demands a new supply of air.

Students of biology will remember that there is direct connexion in the long line of evolution between reptiles and birds. During the Jurassic period there were evolved immense bird-like reptiles, and from them, in course of time, our modern bird life has come. To-day, I know of no closer connexion in outward appearance between the avian and reptilian forms than is to be seen in the Darters, first cousins to the cormorants, one species of which *Plotus Melanogaster*, is, I believe, not altogether unknown in Far Eastern waters. So snake-like are these birds, especially when their body is submerged, and only their long neck and head visible on the surface, that they have been repeatedly mistaken for snakes, so repeatedly as to gain the name "Snake-birds." There is a drawing in "The Encyclopaedia Britannica" of an Indian whip-snake in which the head and neck resemblance to that of a darter is unmistakeable. Darters are even more rapid in their under-water movements than cormorants. So far as I know they are the only birds that bayonet their prey, driving their sharp bill right through the body instead of grasping it. Coming to the surface with their transfixed prey, they free themselves with a shake of the head and swallow at pleasure.

Of the same genus, though wide asunder as the poles in appearance, are the pelicans, those immense clumsy creatures which, being a full eight or more feet in length at their best, are half as much again in width from tip to tip of wing! The great distinguishing feature of the pelican is its pouch, dependent from the lower mandible. This, it must be remembered, is very largely under muscular control, which fact accounts for its apparent variation in size from a bag capable of containing a couple of gallons of water to a slight swelling below the bill. Many are the curious traditions connected with the pelican. Because its yellow bill has a red

tip, which tip is pressed against the breast when the contents of the pouch have to be placed ready for the young, it was said that the little ones were fed by the mother's blood, which also revived them when they had been killed by serpent venom! The common cormorant is represented in China by the species *Pelecanus mitratus* (David). *Pelecanus philippensis* is another species common from Mongolia southwards. But for a little roseate colouring and a few yellow feathers on the breast, the pelicans are white. Their feathers are of lanceolate shape and with none of that close fitting nature which characterizes those of some other water birds. Pelicans, as a matter of fact, prefer the surface of the water to its depths. It is said that they are capable of forming strategic and tactical combinations with cormorants with whom they are allied, and whose acquaintance they certainly cultivate. When hunting under these circumstances the cormorants go below and frighten the fish they cannot catch to the surface where the pelicans scoop up the struggling mass a dozen at a time! Acting alone, they are credited with intelligence sufficient to enable them to form line with yard-wide intervals, and so drive fish into shallow places where like destruction can be dealt. The young help themselves, not from the throat of the parent as with the cormorants, but from the pouch.

A flock of pelicans numbering several thousands, such as may at times be seen during their migrations over lands in their line of flight, must be a sight indeed. The pelican, though apparently so clumsy, can yet rise to an immense height and maintain a steady flight for a considerable time. His body is said to be particularly well supplied with hollow bones, so much so that an old writer declares the dried skeleton to weigh no more than 30 oz. This for a bird known in China to weigh at times more than that in pounds, sounds questionable, but may be true. Pelicans are almost ubiquitous, except in the colder countries. Hereabouts it has been my fortune to have a close view of only one. That was on the Ningpo river. The Captain of the old "Peking" and myself watched it through our glasses as the steamer slowly made her way into port. Personal friends have told me of a *rencontre* with one on a marsh at the Fenghwang Shan. They were snipe-shooting when they espied a big mass of something in the distance which they could not at first make out. With No. 8 shot only, there was no hope of bagging anything so huge as a pelican, which a nearer approach showed the creature to be. Nevertheless a stalk was attempted, foredoomed, as everybody who knows those marshes will allow, to failure, for there is no cover, or rather was none. Reclamation has provided a few dykes since then. But as the

"pelican in the wilderness" had doubtless seen the sportsmen long before they saw him, it may well be imagined that he was enjoying the event as much as they. He waited and watched as long as he felt it wise, and then went up in clumsy majesty and sailed away. We have in this neighbourhood nothing like the numbers of pelicans reported from some of the southern parts of Europe, the coasts of the Black Sea, and so on. Neither are there as many as may be found in favoured districts farther south. But taking China as a whole, she has her fair share of the pelican hordes as she has of others. In the winter of 1891-2 a member of the Customs' staff stationed at Swatow, Mr. P. E. Milhe, was out shooting one day, when, from behind some cover, he surprised no fewer than five pelicans within a distance of 50 yards. He was on the look-out for geese, and so was prepared with somewhat heavy shot. Firing at the leading bird he was surprised to see no fewer than three of the five drop to his first barrel. The best of these he presented to the Shanghai Museum. It measured eight feet from tip of beak to tip of tail: it had a stretch of wing of eleven feet; its beak was twenty-two inches long, and its total weight thirty-two pounds! Something like a bird!

Chapter XXXIV.

THE IBIS AND CRANE.

There is something in human nature which is attracted by mere size. Given a giant and there at once is a being which people will pay to see. Given a big bird and the ordinary bird-lover is sure to take special note of it, notwithstanding the fact that there may be many smaller ones far more deserving attention. This much is urged in part apology for the present chapter. One cannot but be struck with the upstanding appearance of a crane, with its length of leg, of neck, and of bill, with its extraordinary appearance on the wing, of which Japanese artists have made such wonderful use, and with its dignified stalk as it walks or wades in search of food. The crane is the tallest bird in China, and I hope that fact may excuse some little subservience. But to make the apology complete it must have attached to it a further confession that it is mere size and nothing more which has brought together the ibis and the crane in one chapter, for the former belongs of right to the heron tribe, whilst the latter is more closely allied to the bustards. As an excuse it may be added that it is hardly true to say that size is the only link: for there is the fact that both ibis and crane love low-lying lands, and feed on much the same sort of food.

Visitors to the Shanghai Museum will see two specimens of the ibis known as *Ibis Nippon*, the Japanese variety, in which the beak is some nine or ten inches long, red tipped, the head bald and red in colour, the irides yellow, the crest and neck of an ashy grey, and all the rest white. Swinhoe tells of having met with this particular species along the banks of the Tamsui River in N. Formosa. There is a rosy tinge in the white of these birds, more marked in some cases than in others. The *Ibis Nippon* ranges quite widely in China, migrating as circumstances require. He is of a watchful, suspicious nature, with little trust even of the harmless farmer of the Chinese fields.

The so-called Sacred Ibis is not known in China. He is essentially an African bird. Strange to say he has disappeared from Egypt where, in ancient times, he was treated with such marked reverence. In India and China his place is taken by *I. melanocephala*, the black-headed ibis. An Arab

name for this bird is *Abou-mengel*, the "Father of the sickle," alluding to the shape of the beak, which recalls that of the curlew. With their long legs, ibises can get over the ground pretty quickly, making at times in their hurry quaint jumps into the air. Once well on the wing they fly well. Their height varies from about two feet to two feet six inches.

The dark-coloured ibis, a sort of chocolate-brown, sometimes called the Black Ibis, is also known in the Far East, having the technical name of *I. falcinellus*. It is somewhat smaller than the last-mentioned, and there is more variation in colour between the sexes, as also between parents and young. The glossy ibis, as it is also called, has an extremely wide range, being known from southern Europe to southern Africa, from Africa to Australia, and from Australia through India to China.

I. Sinensis, our very own ibis, is but a variety of *I. Nippon*. It lives and breeds in considerable numbers in some parts of the northern provinces, coming south with the colder weather. Père David says there are always two young ones.

Turning to the cranes, we find ourselves fifty per cent. richer in species than was the case with the birds just noticed. Only four species of the ibis are described to six of the crane. There is *Grus leucogeranos*, the white Siberian crane, *G. Virgo* or *Numidica*, *G. Cinerea*, the common grey crane, *G. monachus*, the white-headed crane, *G. vipio*, and *G. viridirostris*, the green-billed. Of all these, the only specimens in the Shanghai Museum are the last-named, and the white-headed, of which there are three.

Grus leucogeranos, the white crane, is a very fine bird. With the exception of some of the primaries the whole plumage is a pure snowy white, the long wing feathers being a jet black, and so forming, when outspread, a striking contrast. A tuft of delicate white feathers hangs pendent from the breast. The only colours visible are the red legs and the same tint shown on the bare patches round the eyes. As the true home of this magnificent bird is Siberia, though it is said to migrate at times to India, we do not see them as a rule in this neighbourhood, though they are known in the more northern portions of the country. The male stands nearly four feet in height.

About the same height stands the green-billed crane of which we have a specimen. He gets his name from the verdant tinge seen in his mandibles, but his main plumage, as in the Siberian bird, is white, though there is a greyish ashen tinge on the neck, and the legs and feet are black.

G. Virgo, the Demoiselle, or Numidian crane, is of darker tint, and is remarkable over and above that for its more graceful shape. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine greater purity

of curve than is exhibited by the demoiselle. There is no bald patch on the head of the virgin crane. On the contrary, the crown of bluish slate is heightened in appearance by the black of the cheeks, neck, and pendent tuft, whilst in sharp contrast against these there is a tuft of white feathers springing from the side of the head behind the eye, and standing out beyond the back of the head a distance of two inches or so, something as a bunch of quill pens might do, forming one of the jauntiest bits of ornamentation to be seen in the whole avian world. The remainder of the body is a bluish slate colour, with black edging to the feathers, and practically black terminations to the tail feathers which in this species nearly reach the ground, instead of hanging only as far as the knee as is the case in most of the crane tribe. Altogether, the demoiselle need not fear comparison even with its magnificent Siberian cousin. The height, however, is somewhat less, being only about three feet three inches.

Of *Grus Vipio*, I know extremely little. Père David tells us it is well known in Manchuria, along the bank of the Amur and the Ussuri, as also in the north-west provinces of China. It is described as having a slaty grey body, a pure white head and neck, with black forehead and cheeks, and red legs.

The white-headed variety is also common in the north-west provinces, though in summer it is frequently seen in Korea and Japan. It is of a slaty brown colour running almost to sooty black at times. Only the head and neck carry the white feathers which give its name. So marked, it is easy to be distinguished from the other species. The three specimens in the Shanghai Museum vary in height from between two and a half to three feet.

I have left *G. cinerea*, the common grey bird, to the last. This, at its full height, will bear comparison in stature with the largest of the others, standing a good four feet when full grown. Long ages ago he was a native British bird, and even now, moved thereto, perhaps, by long hereditary suggestion, a stray specimen or two will stretch the summer jaunt sufficiently to be seen along the Norfolk Broads or amongst the marshes of Essex. Cranes migrate at immense heights, sometimes in the V shape taken by geese, sometimes in a modified form of it in which there is a third line parallel with one of the others and so forming a second V within the first, and sometimes with the other side also doubled making a W. Even at their highest, however, the loud trumpet calls of the birds may be heard as they answer each other, possibly only for companionship, perhaps, however, in response to directions from the leader. A soft ashen grey is the general colour of the common crane, though its primaries are black.

and there is a streak of greyish white from the eye backward down the side of the neck. The iris is red, as also is a bald patch on the crown. Most of the cranes seen in this neighbourhood belong to this species. They are, perhaps, most common in the more newly reclaimed portions of the delta. I have seen them at times in the neighbourhood of the sea-wall, and once put up a party of five or six from a half dried creek within the city of Changsha. Flushing cranes inside a city will sound somewhat curious to readers acquainted only with cities of the west. But sportsmen in this part of the world know well enough that a Chinese "city" frequently means nothing more than a space of land surrounded by a brick wall backed with an earthen embankment. The amount of house-covered space within varies very largely indeed. In some "cities" there are square miles of open country and only a score or two of houses: in most, there are still plenty of open fields. It not infrequently happens that some of the very best pheasant shooting is to be found within the city wall, especially since the Taipings left so much of the enclosed area covered with ruins. I have not infrequently put up teal and wild duck, also, within a circumvallated area, so that there is nothing specially strange in seeing cranes there. The common crane in South Kiangsu is sometimes disposed to be trustful where man is concerned. I once succeeded in getting within about sixty yards of a pair down by the sea-wall, though we were all in the open and within full sight of each other. Unfortunately I had no glasses with me, or I might have sat down and taken observations at will. I had a gun with No. 4 cartridges, and it was, perhaps, the sight of that which caused the birds to think that closer acquaintance was undesirable, though I had no desire to shoot them. So with a hop or two, and a flap of the broad wings they took to flight exactly as one sees them on a Japanese screen, all legs, wings, and neck. Usually, however, cranes are too wary to allow of close approach, and their height enables them to see a long way round. So it comes to pass that few are shot, which is just as well, perhaps.

Chapter XXXV.

WAGTAILS AND BUNTINGS.

Extremes meet when such immense birds as cranes and such little ones as wagtails find themselves in consecutive chapters. But having done our duty to size it is now allowable to make our bow to symmetry and rural simplicity. This we gladly do by calling our readers' attention to a genus at once dainty, shapely, and refined as well as confiding and familiar. The wagtails are no exotics to any of us. England, France, Germany, and most of the countries of the Old World, including China, may claim one or more of the wagtails as their own, and in most lands their free and easy habits make them general favourites. Not only will they allow the near approach of man, but they are even more familiar with cattle, sheep, and horses, round whom they run and fly in pursuit of flies and other insects. They may often be seen darting about under the bellies of horses, and between their legs, the quadruped knowing from pleasant experience that the pretty little feathered biped is one of his best friends. Even the domestic cat, enemy as she is to birds—not excluding wagtails—is apparently permitted to stalk, and stalk, nearer and nearer to a pair of them when chasing insects on the lawn. Only a few days ago I was an interested spectator of such an incident. A pair of wagtails which I had been watching for some little time, suddenly became aware that a neighbour's black cat was eagerly glaring at them from the edge of the grass. They, of course, were well out in the open, and apparently took not the slightest notice. Little by little the cat made her approach, catlike, her body pressed to the ground, her loose shoulder joints showing well up above her back as she cautiously moved inch by inch nearer her intended prey. They, either in real or well simulated earnest, remained intent on flies. When both their backs were turned grimalkin would make a rapid move of perhaps three yards. Then he was glued to the ground again. This continued for some time, a perfect object lesson in what turned out to be hopeless stalking. When within seven or eight yards the cat made a rush, and with a spring tried for the nearest. This was evidently what the wagtails wanted. To them it was a game. Up they went with their

little *te-weet*, and then down again within ten yards or so of their enemy. She, seeming to realize that she was being made a fool of, gave up the chase, rolled over once or twice nonchalantly as though to make it appear that her object, too, was mere sport, and then quietly walked off.

These were a pair of pied wagtails, one of the common kinds here during the winter. Their family title *Motacilla*, is merely Latin for the English name, but there is so much difference of opinion amongst authorities respecting the qualifying adjective attached to the various species, that I prefer in this chapter to refer to the birds simply by their English descriptions. "Polly wash-dish" is the Dorset name for this familiar little bird, and "dish-wash," "washer-woman" or something of the kind seems to be a common name for it in other countries as well. This is probably due to its habit of wading in shallow water for the purpose of capturing tiny fish, tad-poles, water molluscs, and the like. Washerwomen in Europe used to stand, and in some countries do still, in the water for the purpose of cleansing clothing on a stone as we formerly saw our own washermen doing here in the filthy creeks around Shanghai. On land the nimble wagtail is a splendid runner. He doesn't hop as though on a pair of wooden legs as the sparrow does. For his size, I am inclined to think the wagtail more than a match for the pheasant so far as pedestrian powers are concerned.

He is a beautifully marked little creature though dressed in naught but black, white, and grey, and his clothes fit him like a glove. There are no loose ends about him. Everything is spick and span. His tail, whose balancing feats give him his common name, moves as though it were composed of one feather instead of twelve. A very near relative, so near that some people still think it a mere variety, is the so-called white wagtail. Its main difference lies in the greater proportion of lighter colour; habits, method of flight, and other things being practically identical. Around Shanghai we have during the colder months two or three species with a great deal of yellow in their plumage. These are, perhaps, slightly smaller than the common pied kind. What is called the grey wagtail in England is principally distinguished from the two before-mentioned by its yellow under parts. Its wings are dark, its tail black and white, and its gorget also black. But its head and the upper part of its back are of a bluish grey. It exhibits on the wing all the undulatory graces common to the genus. So quick are most of the wagtails that they frequently use their powers of flight for the capture of their prey. The yellow wagtail is entirely of the golden tint with the exception of the wings and tail. These, as in the others, are black with a white admixture. Still another, sometimes

known as Ray's wagtail, is known in China. Indeed there are several more, but considerations of space prevent a notice of them all. Ray's varies from all the rest in having a delightful slaty-blue covering for the head lightened up with a white eye-stripe. Its upper parts are a yellowish green, whilst below there is pure yellow.

This species differs from the rest in its nesting place which is usually amongst tufts of grass in meadow land or waste ground. The other wagtails usually prefer a hole somewhere or other, in a wall, in a decayed tree, or anywhere convenient. I have seen wagtails' nests in a bank near water, or on the side of a hedgerow. They all lay about the same sized egg, marked either with brown or reddish brown spots. It is not an uncommon thing to find that the cuckoo has deposited one of her eggs amongst the wagtail's. Then, of course, woe to the wagtail brood! They are shouldered out by the still blind little murderer with a demoniac instinct which secures its own maintenance at the expense of four or five other lives. Seebohm tells of the early appearance of the wagtails in Siberia where in the spring they are amongst the first arrivals. In March, of this present year, I watched the collection of a little band of them which had all the appearance of being off on their northern journey. They had collected on the roof of a building overlooking the British Consular compound. Last month, I had the pleasure, not of seeing an actual return, but of watching three new arrivals, apparently two parent birds and a young one. Paterfamilias was a little lame in the left leg. When he remembered that fact he would stand pensive and rather sad-looking with the weakened member tucked up under his feathers. Then all of a sudden, if a fly showed itself on the grass, down came the injured limb, and off went the bird in hot chase utterly forgetful of injuries. Paterfamilias was, except for the lameness, in the very pink of condition. There was a good deal of difference between his plumage and that of the other two. They stayed only for two or three days, and then disappeared, probably for winter quarters a little farther south.

The buntings, to which allusion has already been made in an earlier chapter in connexion with their relatives, the finches, claim a little further notice just now, because it is not at all uncommon to see specimens of some of their species whilst on their way south. Some buntings are with us always. Others pay us flying visits in spring and autumn on their way to and from their breeding places. I have had an opportunity of watching a pair within the past fortnight, the male of which was nearly as yellow as our British yellow-hammer. If one keeps still, these birds seem to care

little or nothing for the mere presence of man, taking as little notice as the British hedge-sparrow. So with sharp eyes, or lacking these with a good binocular, it is quite easy to watch for a considerable time whilst these interesting little birds search about on the ground, round tree-trunks, and amongst the grass for their food. China is rich in members of the *Emberiza* tribe. In the north there may be seen at the proper season the Lapland bunting, *Emberiza lapponica*, a prettily marked species which sings its little song whilst in the air. The reed bunting has borrowed the appearance of the sparrow to such an extent as to be very often called the reed sparrow. Well known in almost all parts of China at the proper season is the yellow-breasted bunting, *E. aureola*. No less common is the meadow bunting. I have never met with our yellow bunting or yellow-hammer in China. The male bird which I saw the other day was only about as yellow as the female yellow-hammer in England. The most lovely of all the buntings one may see, if watchful and lucky, in the journey across Siberia. That is the only place where it has been my good fortune to get a glimpse of it as the train passed by. A very dainty little creature is *E. nivalis*, the snow bunting, probably found on Chinese soil only in the north, though it seems to visit the south of Europe during the winter season. Instead of the golden colouring of the yellow-hammer, it has white for the head, neck, and under covering, the back, wings, and tail only being provided with a darker tint. Last but not least, the nearest relative in China to the celebrated ortolan, loved of epicures, is a variety of our meadow bunting, *E. cia*. There is nothing particularly striking in the appearance of the ortolan, his arrangement of browns and yellows making him out as a typical bunting. It is his misfortune that he should, when caught and fattened for the table, be such good eating.

Chapter XXXVI.

AUTUMN MIGRANTS.

When the summer sun of South Kiangsu has gone down for the last time, when frizzled humanity has congratulated itself on the fact that at last the autumn winds do blow—for have they not felt at early morn and dewy eve that crisp suggestiveness of coming cold—then is the time to think of human as well as avian migration. The wise man remains in his own comfortable home whilst the thermometer riots in the "nineties" and sometimes makes its century, but when September has arrived, and the "hunter's moon's begun," then is the time for escape from darkened rooms into the glorious light of the noon-day sun. Birds know it as well as man. The earliest snipe has come before the tenth of August perhaps. His cousins, a fortnight or three weeks later, fill the night air with the cries of "disembodied spirits," as the Chinese believe, and then is the time for the naturalist-sportsman. Off he goes, whenever he gets the chance, up-country. His gun goes with him, but cover is too thick for shooting unless he is out for specimens.

He is sure, however, to see some of the passing migrants. A few of the more delicate leave in August, some of the most brilliant fly-catchers, for instance, but the orioles stay on into September, and some of the fly-catching fraternity also. It was late in August that I once saw a Dhyal bird *(Copsychus saularis)*, the only one I have ever seen in China. It is common enough in warmer climes, in India, for instance, but only very occasionally gets so far north as this, which is a pity, for its bright sprightly appearance would be a distinct addition to our bird life. In size it is no bigger than a bulbul; in marking it is not unlike the magpie. All through the months of September, October, and November, autumn migrants are coming or going. Up-country amongst the woods, one may yet in early September see a specimen of the Narcissus fly-catcher in his beautiful livery of black and gold. If he is amongst the bamboos his tints merge so completely into theirs that without very keen eyes or some movement on the part of the bird, he may easily be passed unseen. Still more easy is it to miss his cousin *(Cyanoptila cyanomelaena)*, if he happens to be perched in the shade, for beautiful

as he is with his Cambridge-blue back, his blue-black breast and white continuations, he also seems to form part and parcel of his background. But once seen he is worth watching for any length of time that his restlessness permits. He is about the size of a robin, the British robin-redbreast, not the American robin, which is bigger and is really a thrush, I believe. If fortune favours, your trip may bring you face to face with another charming little bird on its way back to the south. I saw one on the passage north in the spring, but have not been favoured with a similar vision since. He also is very robin-like in shape, movement, and even in colour, for his back is of the same brown, and his breast is red, but the red does not cover the whole of his under parts as in the redbreast, and the tint from the lower bill down over the throat is a bright canary yellow merging into the red below. This is the red-billed Liothrix. He would certainly be called a robin if he were in England, though he is really related to the bulbuls. Of these we have plenty. The common bulbul *(Ixus Sinensis)* is not a migrant in this neighbourhood, but stays with us the whole year through, and ought to meet with more appreciation than he does, for he has not a little quiet charm both of feather and manner. But his chief claim to consideration is the fact that when other birds have ceased their songs, when the little pipe of the hawfinch has ended, and the song of the blackbird is a reminiscence of spring, the bulbul does his very best to fill the gap. In the early morning he may be heard carrying on a conversation with all the other bulbuls in the neighbourhood, for his voice production is rather in the talking than in the singing line. One lies in the bunk and listens. The outer door of the boat is open, as are the skylights. Every note is clear and distinct, every syllable, I should have said, and imagination at once begins to put words to the calls. Surely that was a little chuckle at a sparkle of avian wit just expressed. Every sentence is short and crisp, not more than five or six syllables as a rule, and so the talk goes on for half an hour or more. I have some reason to believe, though I have not seen them, that certain of the green species of bulbuls are to be met with amongst the hills round the Ta-hu.

What a delight it is to spend a few days of our glorious autumn weather in that classical neighbourhood, to drink in the intoxicating air of the hills, to look out over the far-spread lake, the wooded slopes, and all the endless beauties of a plain "well watered everywhere, even as the Garden of the Lord." Those glorious autumn tints, if the excursion be about the beginning of November, before the big blow has come down from the north-west, are tints to be excelled nowhere in the world except, perhaps, in the woods of Virginia, and not even

there if the landscape is rich in wax-bearing trees, for these Tallow trees, as they are sometimes called *(Stillingia sebifera)*, are unsurpassable anywhere. An orchard of tallow trees at the right moment is a sight for the gods. All the red end of the solar spectrum is there in flashes of living fire. The scale is run from the green of the still sheltered and unaffected leaves through greenish yellow to canary and orange, then orange with touches of light pink, light pink on to darker pink, and so through endless nuances to the most brilliant scarlet, finishing up with the deepest crimson. Adequately to reproduce the effect of such a sight is impossible even with a palette: words fail ignominiously. We must await a perfected system of colour photography before we can hope to see an adequate representation of such autumnal glory.

If the occasion be well selected there may be other beauties besides those of leaves, for there is nothing of which birds of many kinds are more greedy than the fat tri-partite berries of the *Stillingia* which take fire from a lighted match. As these ripen gradually from the beginning of October to the middle of November the trees need watching or nothing in the shape of fruit would be left. I have seen half a dozen blackbirds at a time gorging themselves with the greatest gusto, bulbuls just as eager, tits with an advantage over the heavier birds since they can cling easily to the slender twigs on which the berries grow, sparrows, finches, the blue magpie *(Urocissa cerulea)*, and even our common friend the black and white. Underneath, making a very good meal off the berries shaken down, is the common dove *(Turtur Sinensis)*. All this to the naturalist is more pleasing than it is to the farmer, with whom one can fully sympathize, for there really is no limit to the rapacity of birds.

Mention of the tits reminds one of the not uncommon appearance of a tiny little bird which passes us twice a year, the gold-crest, or golden-crested wren, a lovely little creature with all the agility of the tits and even more beauty. *Regulus oristatus*, or *R. Japonicus*, as our local variety is called, may frequently be met with in wooded parts. He cares little for the presence of man, and will go on with his leaf to leaf search for insects though a pair of human eyes peers at him from a distance of a yard or two only. His olive green is charmingly set off by the little golden crest which gives him his name. Still more jaunty, if that be possible, but less common, is the "Fire-crest," *R. ignicapillus*, a close relative of the gold-crest and about the same size. His principal difference is a bright ruddy-orange crest in place of the gold. Another crested bird well known in China, is the Bohemian waxwing, also a migrant in most parts. *Ampelis garrulus* is usually to be met with in flocks of varying size.

The waxwings get their name from their peculiar red, waxlike appendages on the secondary wing feathers. They are pleasant looking birds, dressed by no means showily in light grey brown above, black primary wing feathers, a tail tipped with a bar of gold, a black throat, and wine-red tints for the under parts. By the Chinese they are known as the "great peace birds," *Tai-ping-tsiao*. This in all probability is in allusion to their general quietness, for notwithstanding the classical *garrulus* in the name, their only note is a soft, gentle, plaintive sort of whistle. Some spend the winter in this latitude, or even farther north. Other winter visitors will have arrived in great numbers before the end of November. Already I have seen two or three varieties of the thrush family. Some merely give us a call in passing, such, for example as the rock thrush, which makes it way to the hilly districts in the next province. One or more of the redwings stay the winter. These may be found with a considerable number of friends amongst cotton stalks so long as any remain.

But perhaps the most striking of our autumn callers is the hoopoe, *Upupa Epops*. There is an old eastern story of the hoopoe. King Solomon was once nearly overcome with the heat of the sun when on a journey. The king of the hoopoes called together his subjects and these, flying over the suffering sovereign, formed a cloud to shelter him. Grateful for such service, King Solomon asked what return he could make. "Grant that each of us may wear a golden crown," was the reply. The wise monarch shook his head, but granted the request. Then arose such a persecution of hoopoes as never was. They were soon in danger of extermination, and all because of the golden crowns. "Pray, O King, give us a crown of feathers instead," pleaded the humbled hoopoe monarch. And so it came to pass that the hoopoe of the present day has that charming erectile buff crest tipped with black! That, however, is by no means his only attraction. Though buff is the governing tint of his upper parts, his lower back and wings are beautifully barred in black and white, as is his tail. In flight, this marking has a far more striking appearance than when the bird is at rest. His long slender bill, gracefully curved, and very sharp, is another noticeable feature in his outfit. To the Chinese he is sometimes known as the "coffin-bird," from his liking for the holes and hollow receptacles they provide for his nest. In his breeding quarters the hoopoe is quite familiar, and will nest anywhere in the neighbourhood of houses, even on verandahs if he can find a suitable spot. In the winter, and when migrating, he is a little more suspicious. But he well repays watching, as do many others of which lack of space forbids even mention.

Chapter XXXVII.

BIRDS OF PREY: VULTURES.

Nothing in the whole range of bird life challenges attention more forcibly than the nature and habits of the birds of prey. One bird lover may have as his particular favourites for study a certain group of birds, another another, but there is no one who takes any note of feathered life at all but feels compelled to be interested in the eagle, the falcon, the vulture, and the hawk. They typify in a very important sense all that is perfect in the mechanism of flight, all that is bold in the nature of courage, and all that is striking in avian temperament, besides having that nameless attraction which attaches itself to the bold buccaneer, be he of the air or the water. Few if any of the rapacious birds condescend to beauty of plumage. Not for them are the rainbow tints of the tropics, or the brilliant metallic sheen so often seen in temperate climes. Simple browns and greys are the governing hues of the raptores. Here and there one adorns himself with a crest, or a pair of horns, as the owl, but as a rule the dress of eagles, falcons, and other preying birds is of the plain work-a-day order, often apparently even loose and ill-fitting.

Yet there is no lack of variety in the order. They range in size from the enormous vulture of the Andes, the spread of whose outstretched wings is measured in yards, to the tiniest little hawk or owl, barely larger than a good sized thrush. In food they differ in the same degree. There is all the difference in the world between the vulture tribe which gorges itself on any dead bodies that it can find and the dainty little hawk which darts through the air to seize a finch, a sparrow, or even an insect. There is a natural disgust in man at the mere thought of the vulture, which is not lessened by his repulsive appearance, and still more repulsive manner of feeding. There is nothing of that sort experienced when one sees the lightning flash of a falcon, or the dart of a hungry kestrel. One hears the chased blackbird's agonizing cry; perhaps one thinks of a songster the less and feels sorry for his fate, but such occurrences are in the nature of things. The pain is soon over, and Nature is, as the poet tells us, "red in tooth and claw with ravin."

We can no more understand it than we can stop it. Besides, many of the preying birds are of great use to man. Some have developed a taste for all forms of reptile life, and wage incessant war on snakes, lizards, frogs, and the like. Others take to vermin, and decimate the ranks of rats and mice. Not a few have lost all taste for "red meat" and live on fish. Still others pursue insects. Few indeed there are which are dangerous to domesticated animals. The golden eagle finds it at times easier to get an unprotected lamb than a scurrying hare, and so takes toll from the sheepfold, and has even been known to go so far wrong as to assault the children of the shepherd himself. That, of course, gets him into trouble, for regal as he is, and proud as any land-owner may be to have such a tenant on his property, human life is sacred, and a rifle bullet or a charge of buck-shot is apt to be the avenger of the child and the mentor of better manners.

Another point which makes the birds of prey part and parcel of the bird lore of all climes is their practical ubiquity. The sparrow is easily acclimatized anywhere. One sees him beneath the vertical rays of an equatorial sun: one finds him at home in Siberia with the very soil frozen feet deep, and wherever it is possible for the sparrow to live, it is possible for the sparrow-hawk to live on him. And not only the sparrow-hawk but many others. Crossing Siberia in the first flush of the year's early warmth, say in May, the keen observer is astonished at the wealth of bird life, and not least in that section of it which we are now considering. Many of these birds have crossed from distant Malaya, from the Indian Archipelago, from India itself, and even from Southern Africa. What are such distances to the falcon family to some of whom a hundred miles an hour is child's play? So it is that the spring and autumn migrations of which we have already spoken do not consist merely of the ducks and geese, the snipe and plovers, the finches, warblers, fly-catchers, etc. but of those also which prey on them. It is in bird life as a humourous poet described it amongst the insects:

Big fleas have little fleas upon their backs that bite 'em,
And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*.

Of the many varieties of rapacious birds the world over we in China have no fewer than 65 species as described by Père David. These include both the diurnal and the nocturnal kinds, the former being in the ratio of forty-six to nineteen of the latter. China is, therefore, well represented in the raptorial kingdom, and a visit to the Shanghai Museum will show that the collection there bears evidence to our wealth in this respect. We have vultures and eagles, hawks and harriers, falcons, buzzards, kites and so on. The owls, too,

are fairly represented. Naturally the Chinese have made the best use they could of such opportunities. In all countries, the combined swiftness and hunting instincts of hawks and falcons have been utilized in the service of man. Needless to say such a source of profit and pleasure has not been neglected here. Up north, and wherever the country is open enough to permit of it, hawking is to-day in as great demand by country sportsmen as ever it was two or three hundred years ago in England. On foot and on horseback is the chase carried on, with hawks of all sizes, falcons, and even eagles, the last being trained to follow the larger four-footed quarries, hares, antelopes, foxes, etc. One small variety of hawk is trained to catch sparrows in the environs of Peking. It will probably be necessary to dwell further on this portion of our subject in a later chapter.

Of the vulture family we have but three to account for, and these may be disposed of at once. The first is *Vultur monachus*, so called from a fancied similarity between its ruff-like neck feathers and a monk's cowl. He is a big bird, 4ft. in length and with a corresponding spread of wing. Only when pressed by hunger does he venture to attack living creatures. David says his visits to China proper are rare, but he is known to the northern Chinese as the "great black eagle," his colour being really a dark chocolate brown shading into black with lighter marking on the breast. In Mongolia he is commoner. There is nothing to boast either in his manners or his morals. In common with his tribe he is repulsive to the eye, and to the nose; sluggish, inert, filthy, and cowardly. Once in the air, however, he becomes to the eye transformed. There is nothing graceful in his flight as flight, for his wings flap heavily and laxly, but his soaring ascent in spiral curves is something to wonder over, something for an airman to watch, to envy, and so far as may be to copy. His downward descent, a "coast" of thousands of feet, is in its way equally wonderful. In the long-lived discussion respecting the question whether the vulture is attracted to his prey by sight or scent nobody seems to have referred to one very obvious fact, viz. that vultures are well known to descend and surround not only dead animals but sickly ones, especially those very near their end. This of itself ought to have gone far to settle the dispute, for there is no offensive smell from an animal yet alive. Experiments have proved, however, that it is sight rather than scent that brings the vulture from heights and distances beyond the ken of man to feast on fallen prey. Stuffed animals have attracted them, whilst hidden decaying bodies in a high state of putrefaction have been passed by though it was unquestionable that the vultures knew there was food near.

Another visitor to China is the Himalayan griffon, *Gyps Himalayensis*. He is a bird of the rocks, nesting high up on inaccessible cliffs. Canon Tristram, quoted in "The Royal Natural History," says that he once saw a griffon which had eaten till it could no longer stand, and yet was still continuing its feast lying on its side. No wonder it is said this particular vulture is capable of long fasts. It is not amongst the common visitors to China, but has been seen in the Central provinces.

Our third representative is *Gypœtus barbatus*, which is no other than the well-known Lammergeier of the Alps, the bearded vulture. True vultures have the head bare or downy: the lammergeier's is feathered. In this as in some other respects he approaches the eagle family. He, also, is a big bird, some three and a half feet in length and of great wing power. He loves the mountains over whose tops with his eight or nine feet expanse of wing he sails majestically through the blue. His wings and tail are long and pointed, a contrast against those of the ordinary vulture tribe. It is said that the last Swiss specimen was poisoned in 1887, its mate having been killed as long before as 1862! The Asiatic bird seems to be a true vulture in its feeding, and attacks nothing living, unless possibly driven by hunger to do so. It breeds from November to February on inaccessible ledges thousands of feet above the sea. As a rule, there is but a single egg. It is only in the mountainous parts of Mongolia and Manchuria that the lammergeier is ordinarily to be seen, and there, of course, only as a migrant. Its appearances in China proper are extremely rare. Indeed the larger portion of our raptorial birds come and go with the seasons, some leaving, others coming, during the winter or summer as the case may be.

Chapter XXXVIII.

EAGLES.

Poets and politicians have combined in all ages to celebrate the pre-eminence of the eagle. He was the Bird of Jove to the Greeks, and one of his names in Chinese "Shên ying" would seem to connect him with the Deity also, since the "shên" is the same character as that used in reference to soul, spirit, etc. The Roman soldier went into battle at times only because his "eagle" led the way. In various heraldic forms we find the king of birds adopted as a national emblem by Germany, Russia, France, Austria, and the United States. It was, I think, Washington Irving or Benjamin Franklin who objected to the white-headed eagle as the representative of a democratic people, since instead of working honestly for his own living he subsisted on plunder got from the osprey. At least one Englishman, Captain Bendire, has come to the rescue, and has proved that the white-headed eagle hunts for himself, and more often winged than finny prey. It is only when the temptation is irresistible that he takes to plunder, and what human being can condemn that? Those who live in glass houses should not malign bald eagles.

There is reason for the profound impression which the eagle has made on the mind of man. His eye, his pinions, his talons, his strength, his courage, and his evident superiority to the rest of the feathered race have all been such frequent themes of admiring prose or poetry as to bring into proverbial use many sayings respecting them. There are, of course eagles and eagles. They are not all of the "Imperial" or "Golden" type. Some are closely allied to the vultures, and, if it may be whispered of royalty, even the noblest of the kind occasionally likes, yes, *likes* its game "high." Fulsome praise begets undeserved detraction. Modern writers frequently call in question the high character given by their predecessors to the eagle family. "Bold, indeed," says one detractor of the Imperial eagle, "why, I have seen him put to flight by a couple of crows. . . To my mind he is no better than a big hulking kite." And the world of naturalists has none too much love for kites. But we have all seen similar incidents; sleepy,

winking owls being mobbed, for example, by all the little feathered termagants of the neighbourhood; or a well-fed hawk permitting his otherwise easy prey to pester him with impunity. In Scotland they think there is another reason for the well known complaisance of the golden eagle. That complaisance is shown only in the neighbourhood of his home. There the law of the jungle forbids destruction, and that in the ill-bred—crows and sparrows, for example—has the result usually attributed to familiarity. If you want to understand this thoroughly, you should make a study of the laws, customs, traditions and jurisprudence of wild life as laid down in the inspired works of the creator of Mowgli, Mr. Rudyard Kipling. Yet even eagles make occasional mistakes. Those who live on fish, for instance, now and then grasp at more than they can carry, and instead of emerging with exultant screams, prey in talons, are dragged beneath the surface to a watery death. Or such dubious creatures as the stoat, or polecat, or even the domestic cat at times, are seized in such a way as to allow free play to the weapons which they, as well as their assailant, possess. Not a few instances of eagles meeting their doom thus are on record. But as a rule the natural weapons of a full grown eagle are enough to ensure the instant death of any quarry which it attacks. With an extreme weight of 18 pounds, the blow from a swiftly descending eagle's body is sufficient to send its largest winged prey, the swan, for instance, dead to the ground without a touch of the talons. The beak is never used in killing. When the talons are, they are, as a rule, amply sufficient, for, in good sooth, what are they but eight sharp-pointed spears inserted just where experience has shown the vitals to be, and when they attain a length of three inches, as the centre talon of the eagle does, one or two of the eight are pretty sure to get home. All that is necessary to drive them in to their extreme length is a bending down of the body as though in the act of grasping a perch. The action of the talons is purely automatic under those circumstances. Once I shot a hawk which I wanted as a specimen. He was resting on a branch all unaware of the murderer close at hand. Being killed instantaneously, all the change that appeared after the shot was an inversion of position. The bird was hanging head downward from the branch instead of being seated upon it, the claw grasp remaining as in life.

China is well patronized by eagles of one sort and another. Amongst the sea-eagles, one of the finest is *Haliaëtus albicilla*, the white-tailed eagle, the female of which reaches a length of some thirty-eight inches, the male, as is usual in this family, being somewhat smaller. Some of the fish-eagles confine

themselves to the coast and live on prey snatched from the salt sea waves, but others are to be found far inland wherever lakes or large streams provide the required nourishment. The white-tailed variety is known to British ornithologists as the erne. He does not confine himself to finny prey, but often makes inroads on the farmyard or field, snatching up a fowl, a young pig, or anything within reach. The Chinese variety nests in Kiangsi, travelling in pairs when on migration. Most of the fish eagles seem to like nesting on tall cliffs, but they will make use of trees when necessary. The nest grows year by year to an enormous size. At its best the white tailed eagle is a fine bird, its yellow beak, cere, and feet contrasting with the lighter and darker browns of the body, whilst the tail gives its great distinguishing feature. There is a specimen in the Shanghai Museum.

H. pelagicus is even larger than *H. albicilla*, the female being forty-one inches over all. She is, indeed, the largest of her family, and with pure white for wing and tail coverts as well as for the thighs, is lightened in colour much more than most of her relatives. This sea-eagle, however, is not a frequent visitor to us.

H. leucogaster, the white-bellied sea-eagle; is of slighter build, and reaches only some twenty-eight inches. There is a specimen in the Shanghai Museum, but I am of opinion that it has come from some other land than China. It is, however, common from India to Australia.

H. leucocephalus, or *H. Washingtonii*, as Audubon patriotically calls it, is a visitor to N.W. Asia and Mongolia, and is known to the Chinese as the white-headed eagle. The epithet "bald" so often applied to it has no grounds for use that I know of, for the bird is not bald at all, but has its head covered with feathers of a pure white, whence its proper name. It is certainly a striking creature not only from its size, 38 inches, but from the contrasts provided by its plumage. The dazzling white of the head, neck, and tail, together with the tail coverts, stands out in strong distinction to the dark chocolate brown, shading almost into black, of the body parts, whilst the yellow of the beak and feet provides a tinge of gold which enriches the picture immensely. There is all the difference in the world between the description of the white-headed eagle by an arm-chair ornithologist, and that of another by one who loves the field. The former may rouse our envy by the precision with which he tells off the number of feathers in a tail, the number of inches to the primaries, and the microscopic differences to be found between the skulls of two allied varieties, but it is the latter which lives. Under the pen of an Audubon the bird stands before us, a picture of nature not

only in her outward appearance but in all her moods. We see the eagle in swift descent, the fall of the thunderbolt hardly eclipsing it. We see it in attack, eye flashing, feathers ruffling, talons ready. Then it appears in softer mood, when the breeding season has arrived, and there are chicks to feed. Such pictures can be drawn only in the open air, coloured only under the dome of the sky, and finished only by one in entire accord with life in every phase. We have a good deal of sympathy with the impatience with which practical naturalists like Mr. Roosevelt sometimes receive the humanized portraits of their feathered or furred friends reeking of the midnight oil.

The eagle with the fawn-coloured lower parts, *H. fulviventer*, or *Aquila leucorypha*, is also a visitant to the Chinese Empire, and like many of its relatives pays toll in the form of primary or tail feathers for the making of fans. The Chinese in some parts of the country are particularly fond of fans of this description. One other bird may be mentioned in this chapter, Bonelli's hawk-eagle, *Nisaetus fasciatus*, of which the Shanghai Museum has a specimen, though I cannot find it under the same name in David. For size it may certainly rank with the eagles, since it attains a total length of 36 inches, and is thus about two-thirds the size of the golden eagle. In India it is colloquially known as the "peacock-killer," peacocks being wild in that favoured land. But it takes pigeons and other birds of like size. Water-fowl, too, it particularly likes.

The true eagles demand a chapter to themselves.

Chapter— XXXIX.

EAGLES—*(Continued.)*

There are a few characteristics of the true eagles which are apt to be overlooked by the bird-lover whose knowledge is mainly traditional. He has heard so much, for example, of the boldness, the courage, and the rapacity of the eagle that he will be surprised to learn that the royal bird has to give pride of place in respect to real courage to the falcons. Then, again, he is apt to be misled respecting the true haunts of the various branches of the eagle family, the misunderstanding arising largely from the fact that the eagle does not attain to really adult plumage till he is five or six years old. Between his first fledging and his feathered maturity, therefore, he is passing through a number of gradual changes, and it is largely due to this that confusion has arisen in the descriptions of various observers, the eagle not being provided, as the horse is, with age-telling teeth. As we shall see later, climate and surroundings make their mark over and above these general considerations, for eagles, like men, are not a little made by their environment. They all bear, however, unmistakable marks of their regal lineage in the moderately long, strong beak, curving from the cere, the wings large and long, the generally plain coloured plumage, rarely passing out of the various tints of brown, the iris of the same shades, and the large muscular body and limbs with talons formidable even to man and the larger mammals.

We give, as is his due, precedence to the king of birds, the Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaëtos*. It is with some regret that we have to acknowledge that democracy has not been content to let even his title to royalty remain unchallenged. Tradition counts little to the ikonoclast, be he political or ornithological. And so it has come to pass that there are writers and observers in these days who do not hesitate to declare that the claims of the golden eagle to monarchical honours are not to be substantiated. I have no doubt that what they say is correct of the specimens which they have observed. Just so there is at this present moment in Peking a drunken, gambling, swash-buckler who was once heir apparent to an empire.

But *A. chrysaëtos* at his best deserves the homage paid him through all the ages. His better half measures a good

yard in length, he being a little shorter. When with outstretched pinions he dominates the air for miles around him, there are few would care to deny his right. The only really golden parts about him are his feet and cere, the bare covering of the root of the beak. As has been already remarked, his plumage is variable. At times there is a rich ruddy brown with a yellowish tinge to it, especially to that part covering the head and neck, but it is not uncommon in older specimens for this to have disappeared in favour of darker hues, a chocolate brown taking its place. Occasionally white varieties have been seen.

Why the golden eagle should be so wide-spread is easily comprehensible. One has but to watch the tiny territory governed by a pair of magpies, to see with what jealousy they view any intrusion on the part of their own kind, and with what vigorous offensive they resent it. An American observer tells us that in the wildest parts of Oregon eagles' nests are as a rule some twenty miles apart. It is no wonder then that the golden eagle has spread over all northern Europe and Asia, that he is identical with his so-called Canadian relative, and goes south even as far as Mexico, that he is known even in India and breeds in Algeria. To him space is a necessity. He makes his home, as other birds make theirs, according to circumstances. If cliffs are available, he has a seeming preference for them. If not, tall trees, or even the steep worn sides of a river canyon will suit.

In the northern parts of China he is well known. There, plumage takes on so dark a chocolate hue as to warrant the natives, in their more or less inexact way, calling him the "black eagle." Specimens in the Shanghai Museum show that their error is excusable. They know him, moreover, as a bird trained to use for man. Manchus and Tartars, men of the plains from birth as they used to be, have not yet lost their love for the chase, and not only use various kinds of hawks and falcons, but have even trained the king of birds himself to aid them in the attack and capture of the larger bids and medium-sized mammals. Hares, gazelles, foxes, and even wolves are sometimes hunted in this way, the yelling troop of excited horsemen trying to keep up with their winged allies forming a picture for a Caton Woodville to depict. What destruction may be wrought amongst game and wild fowl by eagles is seen from an account of the examination of the surroundings of an eyrie in Germany, where there were found the remains of some three hundred ducks and forty hares!

Next in order, and quite close in rank to the golden, is the Imperial eagle, *A. imperialis*, or *A. mogilnik*. During certain stages of development the imperial is so much like the

golden eagle as to be easily mistaken for it. Once it has attained maturity however, there should be no difficulty. The imperial eagle is somewhat smaller than his rival, the female measuring not more than thirty-two inches as a rule. It is a little more stoutly built also. Its range is less wide. only southern Europe and Asia seem to know the two royal birds. *Imperialis* has the same yellow cere and feet—most eagles have—and a good deal of the same light and chocolate brown, but there resemblance ends. The head and nape of the neck are much lighter, and there is a sequence of lighter feathers descending back and reaching to the tail coverts. The shoulders are covered by patches of pure white, a very clear and distinctive mark. The primaries are almost black, as is the tip of the tail, though its upper parts are considerably lighter. So far as mere looks go, many people would award the palm to the imperial, and not the golden, eagle.

Opinions as to his other qualities vary immensely, from which it may be gathered that circumstances alter cases in bird life as in our own. "There is great beauty and majesty in his movements," says one writer. "He is little more than a great hulking kite," says another. "Noble and courageous, fiercer even than the golden eagle," writes an admirer. "Beaten by crows," retorts the cynic. "Only in default of live prey will he touch carrion," declares Laudator. "He is generally a foul eater," asserts Detractor. And so the wordy war goes on, the sensible man seeing the true explanation in change of environment.

Another eagle well known to the Chinese is *A. clanga* or *Falco rapax*, as some authorities dub him. He is lighter in tint all over except on the wings and tail. From his tawny colour he is known to the Chinese as the "yellow eagle," sometimes as the rat-catching eagle, his favourite prey being rodents and the smaller mammals. In some places it would seem that this fare is varied widely, lizards, snakes, and even the larger insects being taken into favour at times. The tawny eagle is not so large as either of the foregoing, its length running to about 28 inches or so. One authority makes *A. clanga* to be a very degenerate branch of the regal tree, existing, as he says it does, more as a parasite than as a bold robber. This it achieves by watching the captures made by other birds of prey and then swooping down to deprive them of their booty.

The spotted eagle, *A. maculata*, is slightly smaller still, attaining only some twenty-five or twenty-six inches. But for the spots of white on the tips of his feathers, the spotted eagle would be very much like his nobler cousin, the golden. There are the same yellow cere and feet, the same chocolate brown, more uniformly dark, however, the same bluish

horn-coloured head, and the same black talons. A further resemblance is to be found in the immense area of its habitat. It seems to have made the greater part of Europe and Asia its home, and where it does not regularly reside it comes at times as a visitor. This is the case with the northern and eastern parts of China. Farther south, and in Tongking and Siam, the bird is much more common. It is said that the white marks tend to vanish with age. *A. maculata* is a hunter of small mammals, but has a particular liking for feathered food in the form of ducks.

It is said to share a trait common to other eagles and birds of prey, a trait already mentioned in a preceding chapter, that of the perfect toleration of smaller birds and animals near its home. Some birds are said even to nest amongst the huge agglomeration of sticks which the eagle collects for its own eyrie.

Last of the five eagles on our list is *Spizaëtus Nipalensis*, a "piping" eagle coming only as an occasional visitor, though apparently having a liking for Formosa. It is described as being a terrible foe both to pheasants and squirrels. The crested *Spizaëtus* is quite a dandy amongst the eagles. It has a handsome topknot of golden brown feathers dashed down the middle with black, and rising from a pure white forehead. A splash of black surrounds the eye, and then the white descends to the very feet, covering breast and belly. The back and wings are a ruddy brown, the tail, a black-barred slaty blue. There is more of the falcon than of the eagle look about this handsome bird.

Chapter XL.

FALCONS: THE PEREGRINE.

There are various reasons why, amongst the discriminating as well as the undiscriminating observers of birds, falcons should hold perhaps the very highest rank. In the first place there is the inimitable boldness, combined with a dash and go unapproached by any other birds. Man loves even a robber, provided his robbery has a dash of the dare-devil in it. This moreover, is an age of "record" collecting, and the superlative in any form of sport is sure of its fame until eclipsed. But man was an admirer of speed before the days of stop-watches, and we should have to go back to prehistoric times before we came to the first mental record—if that were available—of the speed of a peregrine or a hobby. I remember seeing one of the former at apparently full speed several years ago. It was on the borders of the provinces of Kiangsu and Chekiang. The season had been mild. The day had been one of those absolutely perfect days which Dame Nature so generously deals out to this part of the world at Christmas-time. I and my companion had been shooting the whole day, and had just returned to the boat. The sun was about to go down, and so was throwing aslant his clear ruddy beams across the landscape, making those glorious changing pictures only to be seen during a few gorgeous minutes at such a time. Out of the north came the peregrine, his course due south. He passed us at a distance of sixty or seventy yards perhaps, not more than 30ft. above the ground, and looked as though he might have an appointment in Canton between five and six. It was then half-past four or so. We saw him appear, we saw him pass, his lighter under parts ablaze in sunset tint; and we saw him disappear. Then we looked at one another, laconically asking, What pace that? We could but guess, of course, but we both agreed that three times the speed of a mile a minute train was somewhere about it. Never before or since have I seen animal motion approaching this rate except, perhaps, in a sudden dash for a short distance.

Yet there is reason to believe that the speed of the hobby outranks even that of the peregrine. I saw one some eighteen months ago cross the Racecourse at Shanghai much as the peregrine was travelling, but it was not in so favourable a

position to observe, nor was the light so good. We know that swallows can easily cover a mile and a half in the minute, and it is generally believed that the swift as easily passes the swallow. When, therefore, one reads, as might have been done in a recent copy of "Country Life," a letter descriptive of the capture of swifts on the wing by a hobby, one is prepared to believe that handsome little falcon ranks amongst the very fastest, if he is not actually the fastest, of birds.

Such qualities would be a sure passport to popularity if they stood alone. But they do not. For strange though it seems, these fierce birds are amongst the most docile of the avian tribe. They might be termed the greyhounds of the bird world. The dog in his wild state doubtless knew his own limitations. Very soon after his first association with man, he must have discovered how much better a chance he had of securing his prey when, to his own powers, there was added the sagacity of his master. Just so with the birds of prey. We have seen that in China even the king of birds himself thinks it no disgrace to hunt with man. The aid is mutual. Falcons of various kinds are not merely docile: when sympathetically treated, they evince an actual love for those who train, feed, and work with them, and will return to the shoulder or wrist of a loved master as a dog will return to his heels. Herein lies a particular and personal reason why man thinks even more of the falcon tribe than he does of the bigger and more powerful eagles. The matter of falconry is one to which we must return by and by. It is time now to look at the representatives of the genus *Falco* as we find them in China. There are many which never appear in this part of the world, but we have more than enough to afford interest to up-country wandering.

Falco peregrinus, the peregrinating, or wandering, or pilgrim falcon, is our finest. He is almost ubiquitous, and is easily distinguished from several minor kinds by his size, reaching in his noble self to some fifteen inches in length, and that of his still nobler partner, whom he takes "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, till death us do part," to about two inches longer. As the peregrine always takes its food in the air, or with a swoop off the ground, it is easy to see what advantage it gains from the help of men and dogs to start its hidden quarry. The prey once taken, the appropriateness of the term *falco*, whence comes our "falchion," is seen at once, for the cutting power of the sharp bill is extraordinary. Thomas Edward, the Scottish naturalist to whom I have before referred, tells how he once watched the dissection of a partridge, of which he had seen the capture, by a peregrine. The prey was not merely

feathered but skinned, from the neck downwards, the flesh being separated into portions, "with as much apparent ease as if he had been operating with the sharpest surgical instrument."

There is nothing specially handsome in the appearance of the peregrine if we except what may be termed his moral qualities. He is darker on the head and back than some of his relatives, but his under parts are light comparatively, the throat being marked with blackish vertical bars, whilst the breast and lower parts generally are barred transversely. These markings on the thigh are characteristic and serve as a distinguishing sign. The cere and feet are yellow, the beak a horny blue. Though the peregrine is common in the central provinces of China, the bird is not of those usually employed by the Chinese in hawking. The peregrine loves a retiring place amongst high land, but for food it rather prefers lower ground and especially that in the neighbourhood of water, for though all sorts of game birds, grouse, partridges, etc. are welcome items in its bill of fare, it has also a fondness for most kinds of water birds, duck, teal, and widgeon amongst the web-footed, and curlew, whimbrel, woodcock, and snipe amongst the waders. It has been estimated in Scotland that a pair of peregrines kills something like 300 brace of grouse in the course of a year, and one can hardly be surprised that the mere "preserver" of game, and still more he who has an eye to the marketable value of his wild life, should look with a not too friendly eye on so rapacious a neighbour. Hence it too often comes to pass that a charge of No. 1, 2, or 3 comes into play, and *Falco peregrinus* is fortunate if he falls into the hands of a Rowland Ward, and not of an "artist" who has never seen a peregrine in the life. Well set up, he may yet be "a joy for ever," otherwise——! There is this to be said in favour of the peregrine: even on a game preserve, he infallibly kills off all weakly birds and so maintains the general healthiness of the community.

Owing to the many variations in plumage due partly to immaturity, and partly to local conditions, there has been a great amount of uncertainty respecting the true life and appearance of the peregrine. I am afraid that the number of ornithological compilers of bird books is far greater than the number of those who have done as Thomas Edward did, that is, who have made a study of wild life at first hand. Respecting the incident of the slain partridge referred to above, he says, "I was glad, nay proud, of this unlooked-for occurrence, as I had never before, on any occasion, had the pleasure of seeing any of these noble birds in a state of nature, or whilst engaged in devouring their prey." He then gives utterance

to a truth which all field naturalists will gladly echo: "If painters, engravers, and preservers of animals, would endeavour to get lessons from nature, and work accordingly, the public would not be so often duped as they are." Reference to one after another of books on birds only serves to show how very much has been borrowed by one from the other. To a naturalist who had the time and the opportunity, a careful search through volumes of "The Field," "Country Life," and similar papers would discover a vast collection of natural history notes whose mere existence shows more than ordinary observing power and love of nature on the part of the writers. These might be used as new illustrations of an up to-date book.

There is some difference of opinion even now as to the exact manner in which the peregrine strikes his prey in the air. Some think that it is shock and nothing else which sends a duck dead to the ground. Others declare that this is unlikely if not impossible, since the striker must feel the blow as much as the one struck. There is on record, however, an instance of a peregrine swooping through the glass roof of an aviary with terrible effect inside but with no harm to himself. The fact that several birds may be struck in the same flock, ducks or rooks, for example, seems to show that if the first blow is due simply to momentum, the others need something more, and the truth probably is that both methods are used, the body blow, and the blow with the claws as the second and subsequent swoops are made. Small prey is simply clutched and carried off. The bill is never used in killing. It is not often, probably, that falcons make mistakes in their swoop, but instances are on record where they have done so, the blow having been delayed too long. A woodcock, for example, being too close to a tree trunk is struck at through the branches with the result that both attacker and quarry are dashed against the bole. Similarly, when swooping at prey on the ground collision occasionally occurs with a piece of rock or stone which served partially to shelter the animal attacked.

The rule as to number of young seems to be that none of the falcon family ever produces more than four in a season, and the number is frequently less. Some of the birds used in hawking are taken from the nest and brought up by hand, others are caught in nets or snares. Morris's "British Birds" tells of a peregrine which for a while made its home on St. Paul's Cathedral, and was seen to seize pigeons in Leicester Square.

Chapter XLI.

FALCON—THE SAKER, GOSHAWK, HOBBY, MERLIN AND KESTREL.

I do not remember to have met the saker anywhere near Shanghai or in the neighbouring province, but it is common farther north, and is a very popular bird with the hawking gentry of the northern plains. Readers must be careful to remember that the classical term for this fine bird, *Falco sacer*, has nothing in common with the Latin "sacer" meaning "sacred" but is said to be derived from the Arabic word for falcon. There is so much resemblance between some of the varieties in the falcon family that names are being constantly used the one for the other. Some writers make *Falco sacer* and *Falco lanarius*, usually known to Englishmen as the lanner falcon, to be identical. Others separate them. To show the minute measurement used in exact differentiation, the following, relating to the saker, may be quoted. "Male—Length one foot seven inches six lines. Wings thirteen inches and a half. Tail eight inches. Female —Length one foot eight or nine inches. Wings fourteen inches and a half. Tail eight inches and three-quarters. Middle toe one inch eleven lines to two inches." (Temminck and Schlegel.)

The saker is considerably lighter in his back covering than the peregrine, which he rivals in size. His head varies from the lightest cream to dark brown with still darker splashings typical of the birds of prey. His back is clothed with dark brown feathers edged with lighter tints, his tail barred. The dark markings on the under side are longitudinal instead of transverse. He is known pretty well all over Europe, and has always been prized for his use in sport. In India he is used in the pursuit of the kite, a cousin of the common bird which we see describing such beautiful aerial spirals in the air above Shanghai during the winter. A chase of that sort must be something worth watching, for though the saker is more rapid in its movement through the air, the kite is an excellent climber, and it is the fight for height which constitutes half the battle in hawking. The pursuer needs to rise above his quarry before the powerful downward stroke is possible. So in a case of this kind there is

a marvellous contest in ascending grace. Each bird strives to outdo the other in the circling ascension. The falcon wins in the end, but even then the victory is not so easy as if the quarry were a partridge or a heron. The kite has as ugly a beak and claws as the falcon himself. He is moreover gifted with fairly good dodging powers when close pressed, and so there is usually more or less of a fight in mid-air before the superior bird brings its still struggling prey to the ground. It is said that kites seem to recognize the saker as their especial enemy, taking no notice of other falcons. In northern China the saker is flown at pheasants and other game birds, hares, and sometimes foxes.

The Goshawk *(Falco* or *Astur palumbarius)* differs from the true falcons in not having the notched bill. He differs, too, in his manner of attack and "rakes" his quarry instead of "stooping" at it, that is to say, he follows it at practically the same level as the bird that is pursued. His name shows one of his old uses, the pursuit of the wild goose. At a distance he might well be taken for a peregrine by such as are not familiar with slight variations in flight, but at close quarters it would be seen that the under markings of the goshawk are lighter in colour, and the transverse bars finer than those in the peregrine. The ground colour too is practically white whilst that of the peregrine is a light golden brown. The Chinese use the goshawk for the capture of game much as they do the saker. Its general habits in the wild state very much resemble those of the sparrow-hawk, to which, except in size, it is frequently likened. It is not by any means as swift on the wing as the falcons proper, and is given rather to tiring down its prey then to capturing it instanter. Partridges, grouse, etc. are started and marked down, to be flushed again and again, until at last the covey is completely worn out, and the goshawk finds it easy to kill as many as he may need. It is the shorter primaries and consequent loss of wing power which call for tactics of this sort.

When we come to the Hobby *(F. subbuteo),* we find a bird which, compared with the goshawk for speed, is like an express train compared with a wheelbarrow. Nobody knows exactly what a hobby can really do when put to it, but the fact, already referred to, that he is able with ease to capture swifts on the wing, serves to suggest that 200 miles an hour, and perhaps more, is within the power of his marvellous pinions. He is one of the smaller falcons, comparable with the sparrow-hawk or the merlin, and may be recognized by the tinge of slaty blue which ornaments his back, wings, and tail. His under parts are of a buff brown colour, the dark markings being bolder, fewer in number, and

arranged longitudinally. Altogether, the hobby is a gentleman both in appearance and daring. He gets his speed partly from his elegant "lines" which enable him to pass through the air with the least possible friction, but mainly from the immense relative power of his wing muscles and the length of his primaries, which when folded remind one of those of the swallow tribe, as their points cross each other over the tail. His lack of size and weight prevents the hobby from attacking anything larger than small birds, and his use in hawking is thus necessarily restricted, but he was at one time very popular for flights at birds from the partridge downwards. Père David found the hobby in all parts of China known to him. I have seen several cross the Racecourse at Shanghai, and only two or three months ago I had the pleasure of watching one seated comfortably on a rail within twenty or thirty yards of the Grand Stand entrance. He was apparently in fine feather, and did not resent examination at the distance named.

Besides hawking for snipe, quail, thrushes, larks, and such-like winged game, the hobby will also take the larger insects, dragon-flies, beetles, etc. In many cases when after larger prey, the male and female hunt together, a combination which must render escape practically impossible.

The merlin (*F. aesalon)* is somewhat smaller than the hobby, but not much. It is possessed of a far more distinctly buff under covering and finer black markings which thus distinguish it from the hobby. It is, moreover, of stouter build. Owing to this it does not hesitate to attack birds which very much outweigh it, plovers, pigeons, and partridges falling frequent victims of its talons. Shore birds such as the dotterel, dunlin, and others are sometimes followed even over the water.

In England the merlin is only a winter visitant to the southern counties. It is, however, sedentary in Scotland, and the other northern parts of Europe. I cannot say positively whether it is often seen in this latitude. There is a specimen from Foochow in the Shanghai Museum, a dainty little bird, instinct with spirit and courage. So eager in pursuit is the merlin that, unlike the peregrine, it does not give up when its quarry has reached the shelter of trees, but will dart in amongst them and take its prey amongst the branches. So keen is it in the chase that many instances are known of its having pursued birds through windows into houses. Once a partridge thus driven took refuge in a church during service time, its fierce pursuer leaving it there. Other birds followed by the merlin have been known to come for safety to pedestrians walking across country.

With *F. tinunculus*, the kestrel, we must leave this most attractive genus, although there are others known to various parts of the Empire, the Peking and Amur falcons, for example. The kestrel, however, serves well to bring this all too incomplete notice to a close, for he is one of the best known of our birds of prey. He may frequently be seen at The Hills where his old English name of windhover is shown to be as appropriate in China as it is at home, for he hangs hovering in one spot here just as he does there, his wings a-quiver, his eye searching the ground beneath for something on which to drop. Sometimes he may be a hundred and fifty feet high, perhaps: then after his quivering halt, he will circle round in a spiral descent to only half that height or less, and again hang motionless but for the tremulous wings. The mere fact that kestrels are seen to be examining the surface of the ground beneath them indicates that their food is to be found there, which is, indeed, the case, the bird taking fieldmice, voles, etc. and birds which are to be found in similar positions, larks, quail, buntings, and so on. In this way it doubtless does some damage amongst young game, partridges, grouse, pheasants, etc. which will account for the inimical feeling towards the kestrel shown by keepers and game preservers at home. In real truth, however, the balance of the evidence is in favour and not against the kestrel, and one of the results of the plague scare now rampant in Suffolk is the statement, constantly being reiterated, that kestrels and other vermin destroyers should be left alone. Old country people are hinting that the return of plague after so many centuries is something in the nature of a "judgement." I have seen kestrels pursue quails which I have put up at various times.

A trait characteristic of the eagle is not unknown in the kestrel—his non-interference with birds which are his immediate neighbours. The eagle goes afield to hunt. The kestrel remains on patronizing terms with the little birds living near its home. It would be extremely interesting to know exactly how this "law of the jungle" first came into force, who made it, and why.

The kestrel may be known by the closer approach to copper colour shown by his back feathers and wing coverts. His outspread tail is of a slaty blue with a broad black bar near the tips, the actual tips being white. His breast and underparts are of a rather dull shade of brown, with the black markings longitudinal. The primaries are dark chocolate with black bars. There is a lesser kestrel perhaps a little more handsome.

Chapter XLII.

HAWKS AND HARRIERS.

We now come to a more daring member of the raptorial family than perhaps any other, the Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*). One can hardly fail when reading of the boldness of this little bird—he is less than a foot long and weighs but five or six ounces—to remember the action of the tiny British war-vessels against the huge, unwieldy Spanish craft when the "Invincible Armada" was making its lumbering way up channel, for even the eagles are not immune from his attacks. The king of birds himself, the golden eagle, has been known to relinquish his prey as the result of persistent annoyance by a sparrow-hawk!

Accipiter nisus is so well known that detailed description is hardly necessary. When he alights, his attitude aids in his identification. He stands almost bolt upright, the long legs (a characteristic of his tribe) lifting him well above his perch. Another characteristic is his short beak. For the rest, his transversely barred breast, and the colouring of his back and wings are much the same as in many others of the raptores. He is a lover of wooded districts, in which he makes bird food his almost sole sustenance. The kestrel preys on the smaller quadrupeds. *Accipiter nisus* rarely looks at them, but anything winged and within his strength to carry off is in danger when he is by, except that he, too, obeys the law of the jungle and will often, if not always, suffer his immediate neighbours to live their lives in peace and safety. His flight is bold and dashing, causing him no apparent exertion, the few flaps which he is seen to make with his wings now and then serving to give him pace enough to glide along a valley, curving gracefully up over clumps of trees without apparently moving a feather and sinking again on the other side so as to keep just that distance above ground which experience has taught to be best for his purpose. It is the female which does most damage amongst the grown up game birds, such as partridges or grouse. She is somewhat bigger, and sometimes twice the weight of her partner, who for his own purposes keeps to the smaller birds, snipe, quail, thrushes, blackbirds, etc., etc. That the gamekeeper is right, from his point of view, in waging incessant war against this marauder is certain, for there is on

record the result of an examination of the immediate surroundings of a sparrow-hawk's nest giving the following astounding statistics:—15 young pheasants, 4 young partridges, 5 chickens, 2 larks, 2 pipits, and a bullfinch! As there are sometimes as many as five young ones in a brood, all characteristically voracious, there is need for a well-filled larder, and it is probable that for digestion's sake it is desirable that food for the young birds should "hang" for a few days.

As a trained bird, the sparrow-hawk is well known to the Chinese, who use it for the capture of the smaller birds. But its temper is excitable to an extraordinary extent, and though capable, under kind treatment long continued, of much gentleness and affection, is slow to learn and quick to forget the little artificial lessons of the professional falconer. Better for this purpose is *Accipiter virgatus*, a sort of lesser sparrow-hawk, which migrates in large numbers from the Malay peninsula, a favourite wintering place, to North China and Siberia. Admirers of this bird insist on its general superiority to its larger cousin. It is even more dashing, especially when trained, and, if possible, still more bold. It is much used in the north for flying at small birds. Unlike the sparrow-hawk, which nests in a wood, not infrequently depriving a crow or a magpie of its laboriously constructed home, the smaller bird loves the hills for its place of nidification, and there brings up its young. The goshawk, which really belongs more nearly to this genus, has already been mentioned amongst the falcons.

Another bird of an allied species, familiar to all sportsmen throughout this part of China, is the hen harrier, *Circus Cyaneus*. Considerably larger and heavier than the sparrow hawk, being as much as 18 inches in length sometimes, and weighing 12 or 13 ounces, the harrier has other characteristics marking it off widely from its lighter, bolder, and more dashing cousin. He is a bird of the air: the harrier of the ground. He confines himself almost entirely to birds for food, the harrier knows few if any limits and will kill a frog or a snake, a mouse or a young rabbit as readily as he will a snipe or a quail. But always on the ground. Even if he follows his prey through the air, as I have often seen him do, it is to drive it to earth. His flight has to be fairly swift to allow of this being done, and there is much grace in his gliding motion, though nothing comparable with the dash of a sparrow-hawk, or the rush of a hobby. It is a very interesting sight to watch a hen harrier quartering the ground in search of food. It works for all the world like an aerial pointer or spaniel, zigzagging in the most scientific manner until something is espied on the ground only a yard

or two below. Then the swoop is made. Even at this distance a quail is sometimes quick enough to get off. I saw one once escape in this way only to be chased by a hawk at which I fired and missed, the result being a triple disappointment, and what might almost be considered for the quail a providential escape, for the harrier lost his quarry, the sparrow-hawk was scared from his by the gun, and I missed mine *viz.* the hawk.

Sportsmen who have read little respecting ornithology will, perhaps, be still ignorant of the fact that the hen harriers, male and female, differ so much in outward appearance that they were long supposed to be of two entirely different species. The first observer to discover that this was not so was Willoughby, though the credit usually goes to Montagu. The female was known as the ringtail, and her colouring differs little in its browns, greys, and similar mixtures from that of many other birds of prey. Seen skimming the surface of the ground, one quite ignorant of bird history might take her for a kite doing some unaccustomed hunting. Her partner on the other hand is quite different. He is a harrier masquerading in the plumage of a gull. There is no specimen of the male in the Shanghai Museum at present, and I have many a time tried to get one to supply the lack. But, though not very uncommon, the "White Hawk, Blue Hawk, or Dove Hawk"—he is known by all these names—is difficult to get near when you want him. Only twice have I had good chances, both of which were spoilt by circumstances. On the first occasion the bird was directly between me and a village well within range: on the other, he had selected a background which contained an old village dame who was furtively watching me out of the corner of her eye. So the Museum remains without this handsome bird. The finest stuffed specimen I ever saw belonged to Mr. Pearce, formerly of Messrs. Weeks and Co. Its head is bluish grey, that tint being the governing colour of the upper parts, as well as of the neck and upper breast. The under parts are lighter, in many cases a pure white; the tail coverts are white; the central feathers of the tail blue, the others bluish grey with dark bars; primaries on upper side dark brown to black. Altogether the male hen harrier is a fine handsome bird, one to stand and watch with pleasure as he quarters a moor or marsh on the look-out for breakfast or supper. The harriers are never far from the ground, on which or near which they live and move, and have their being, the nest being either on the soil itself or in some low bush.

It would be an extremely fascinating task to try to unravel the reason why there should be so marked a difference

between the male and the female of this species. It is easy to understand the colouration of the female. Living as she does on or near the ground, she needs all the protection that earth tints can supply. For this reason her dress is comparable with that of the partridge, quail, etc. But why should her partner be made so conspicuous? His light tints show him up the moment he moves; why should this be? He probably takes no part in incubation and so runs no risks in that way, and it may be that his showy colours serve to attract attention from his mate when she is so engaged.

There is another very handsome harrier, known as Montagu's harrier, with most of its upper covering a delicate greyish blue, breast of the same tint, with brown-speckled under parts and outer tail feathers, and brown primaries. I am not sure whether this species is ever seen in China. Other kinds that are, are *C. macrurus*, the pale-chested harrier, not unlike the male of the hen harrier. David says that this is rare out here, and I cannot recollect ever having seen one myself. *C. aeruginosus*, on the other hand, is met with not infrequently. This is the marsh harrier of England, where, naturally, drainage has lessened its numbers considerably. It is not unlike the female of the hen harrier in appearance, but is somewhat more handsome with its slaty blue wing coverts and tail. Like its cousin it is a searcher of the ground, more especially of swampy ground, where it sometimes finds water-rats, reptiles, and perhaps, occasionally, even fish coming within its grasp. Specimens of this species sometimes attain a length of two feet. A story is told of a tame one which through an accident lost a leg. Its kindly disposed owner fashioned for it a makeshift of wood, which, after modification, was found to answer so well that its owner was enabled to resume hunting operations, and having pounced on a rat deftly turned it on its back, pinned it down with the wooden leg, and gave the *coup de grace* with the talons of the perfect foot!

Chapter XLIII.

BUZZARDS AND KITES.

From the Latin "Buteo," coming from I know not what through the French "Busard," we have the English name Buzzard to characterize a class of birds closely allied to the eagles on one side, to kites on another, and even, in downy softness of plumage, perhaps to owls. Into all the delicate differences which mark off the one from the other, it is not our intention here to enter. Readers can find them minutely laid down in books treating of such exact bird lore. Two species of the genus *Buteo* are known to China, *Buteo Asiaticus* or *Japonicus*, which takes the place of *B. plumipes*, the rough-legged buzzard of western lands, and *B. hemilasius*. The first is a fine big bird reaching anywhere from eighteen inches to two feet in length, and weighing from two to two and a half pounds. In colour it is considerably lighter than most of the raptores already described. Its tints are, as theirs are, brown and grey lightening to white here and there, but none of the browns approaches in darkness the chocolate of the golden eagle and some of the others. The rough-legs vary, however, very widely both in size and appearance. None of the buzzards is gifted with great rapidity in flight, and in consequence their methods of attack and the animals on which they feed differ from those of the sparrow-hawk, the hobby, and the peregrine. The buzzard is a slow, sluggish, apparently lazy bird, so much so that his name in olden days was used as a synonym for slowness and stupidity. But here the owlish softness of the feathers comes into play, and the buzzard makes up in suddenness of attack what he lacks in swiftness. If strong flying grouse, partridge, or pheasant can laugh at pursuit by such a foe, it is very different with the low-lying mole, rat, rabbit, or hare. On them the descent, only from a few feet of elevation, is fatal. Were the feathers of the buzzard as stiff and sharply edged as those of the peregrine, he might be heard approaching, but with the downy-edged covering which nature has supplied the buzzard, there is no sound, and the first notice of his approach which the poor ground-loving mammal receives is the penetrating clutch of his torturing talons. This particular species is commoner in south-western China in the cold weather than in the interior

or in this neighbourhood. He is well known in Japan, and summers in Siberia. His cousin, *B. hemilasius*, follows mainly the same course. An allied species, *Archibuteo strophiatus*, is common in the north and west, and seems to confine its nesting places to high rocks and cliffs, whilst the other buzzards make use of rocks or tall trees indifferently.

Still another cousin is *Pernis apivorus*, or *P. mellivora*, the bee or honey-eating buzzard. He is inclined to copper colour in the brown of his back, with a much lighter breast dotted with dark spots. His cere is blue and his feet are golden. He cannot, of course, confine himself to such a delicacy as honeycomb. Indeed it is not so much the honey as the insects that the bird seems to seek. Failing these it takes to rats, frogs, small birds, and in confinement has been known to eat even fish. Insects and their larvae, however, are believed to be its favourite food, and on these it waxes so fat that, if shot, oil is said to exude from its wounds. It is the only member of the raptorial family that I know of that is capable of running swiftly on the ground. The honey-eater is not common in China. It comes only as an occasional visitor apparently. In length it attains about two feet, and in weight nearly two pounds.

Kites are as common as the honey-buzzard is rare. Our own familiar friend, *Milvus melanotis*, or the black-eared kite, which comes back to us for the cold weather and disappears with ducks in the spring, is too well known to need much description. Unfortunately for our respect for him, he is of the pariah kind, allied to the vultures, and given to carrion rather than to the blood-red plunder of the falcons. He is sometimes well over two feet in length, and the spread of his wings is not infrequently a good five, so that it is little wonder that he can soar as he does without apparent effort, steered here and there by his long and extremely mobile tail. All the admiration which the falcons and hawks force from us by their boldness, their swiftness and dash, is demanded by the kites for their grace on the wing. We watch them circle high in the air over the Settlement at Shanghai, some half dozen or more at a time following one another around the ethereal spiral which seems to have no apex, until their big bulk has dwindled to a dot. Near the ground and when actually flying, there is nothing particularly striking in the movement of the kite. Quite the reverse, as a rule. There is all the lazy flapping of the buzzard, and none of the rush of the peregrine. I have seen a kite follow a hen pheasant which I had put up, but this was, so to speak, more for fun or bravado than anything else. On the other hand, on two or three occasions a kite has served me well

as a retriever in finding wounded pheasants that would otherwise have got away. The old British kite, *Milvus regalis* or *ictinus*, once so common, now so rare, was known as the gled or glead, from its gliding movement, and was, I imagine, somewhat more active than the black-eared variety we have here in the winter. In olden time the kite was a protected scavenger in the streets of London, as he still is in many places in India and China. Under such circumstances he becomes as audacious as the Ceylonese rook or jackdaw, and will even snatch food out of the very hands of men who are unwary. Bones and bits of offal are fought for by kites and pariah dogs, the power of combination amongst the biped robbers being sometimes too much for the greater strength and holding power of the canine. A vigorous rear attack, culminating perhaps in a vicious peck or two from those terrible beaks, induces the dog to quit his prey for an instant in order to inflict condign punishment on his tormentors. But that is exactly what the wily kites desire. Whilst the attention of the dog is taken by the enemies in the rear, those in front secure the booty and fly off with it. The kite, however, does not depend entirely on carrion for existence: he kills for himself when opportunity offers, his prey being generally some of the smaller mammals ashore, or fish afloat. The frequent swoop over the water which we so often see on the Huangpu may at times mean the capture of surface feeding fish, though as a rule it is probably nothing more than the picking up of floating rubbish.

Chil, the kite, whom Kipling so frequently mentions in his Jungle stories, is *Milvus govinda*, a smaller cousin to *M. melanotis*. Père David tells us that this species is rare on the coast, though common in the southern parts of China. I am inclined to think that I once saw a specimen sailing about over the harbour and lower rocks of Liu-kung-tao at Wei-hai-wei. If Mr. Johnston, having given us so excellent an account of Chinese lore based on that British possession, would now devote a little time to the fauna and flora of the northern districts he would deserve the gratitude of every lover of natural history. There is certainly a kite there during the warmer months which, though not altogether unlike the black-eared, is somewhat smaller and more ruddy on the back. It may be a mere variety. I cannot say for certain, as my visits to the island have been short and at long intervals.

The black-winged kite is by far the handsomest of the family out here. He, however, belongs to another branch, and is known classically as *Elanus coeruleus* from the bluish tinge of his plumage. He is common in the south of China, and comes at least as far north as Chekiang to nest amongst

the hills. He might easily be mistaken when at rest for the male of the hen harrier, were it not for his smaller size, the blue kite being only about a foot in length. But his grey-blue head, back, and tail recall *Circus Cyaneus* male in a moment, and the resemblance is increased by the white breast and belly. The iris is a bright scarlet, the cere and feet golden, so that altogether in appearance, the blue kite is a credit to his kind. The reason why he is known as the black-winged is that his wing feathers are considered darker than the tint of his back, the primary coverts being very nearly, if not quite, black. He is said to feed mainly on small birds, insects and mice. These he hunts down after the manner of the harrier rather than of the falcon, seizing them on the ground. Indeed the black-winged kite has not a little in common with the harrier besides the remarkable resemblance in colour, for it quarters the ground at times as he does, and has even been seen to hover for an instant to gain a better view of the ground below. It will whip insects off the stalks of plants or the branches of trees, this of course being done on the wing, but with this exception its prey is taken standing, mice being probably its principal diet. There is a musky odour attached to this bird which serves to identify it. Its egg would seem to mark it off as an intermediary between *Astur* and *Buteo*. It certainly has more of the characteristics, from outward appearance, of the falcons than of the true kites.

Chapter XLIV.

OWLS.

Imagine an uneducated countryman full to the top-knot with superstition of every kind, credulous to the last degree, and capable of an imaginative power given only to such as have all other mental powers dwarfed and undeveloped: then on a fairly dark night let him be confronted in a wild lonely part of the country, (for choice one under dark trees where some tragedy has been enacted) with a shadowy figure now large, now small, in the midst of which glow two balls of living fire, and from which issue hissings, or screeches, hoots, or maniac laughter as the case may be. There is nothing to be seen distinctly, only a swelling, rustling something, with the glaring eyes and the unearthly noises. What happens, if this is a first experience? We know well enough. The countryman turns tail and flies as he never flew before, until the friendly shelter of a cottage door has safely closed behind him. Yet there was nothing more terrible in the dreadful apparition than an owl standing on the defensive, her young probably close at hand. There is the psychological fact, however, and we must make the best of it. It remains a legacy from the past, and it is to be feared one to be passed on to many coming generations, a legacy from parents, nurses, priests, and the superstitious generally who have filled, and will continue to fill, youthful minds with foolish fancies and old world beliefs. The country people amongst whom I was born and brought up were full of folk lore concerning owls and other hobgoblins of the night. Fortunately for me curiosity was stronger than dread. The desire to know overcame the fear of the unknown. I can remember a time when owls were a source of imaginative terror, but before nine summers had gone by, this was all gone for the simple reason that to imagination pure and simple there had succeeded knowledge. The owl had become a well known friend, and was no longer a bogy, spook, or other uncanny imp to make one's blood run cold, or one's hair stand on end. At the ripe age of ten I was an utter skeptic with regard to all such things, and could lie abed and hear the "Crake-crake" of the landrail, or the call of the owls from over the stables, with pleasure in place of dread. "Baint you afeard?" was a by no means infrequent question from

country women and even boys. What was there to be "afeard" of when one knew with perfect certainty that all the supposititious horrors came from birds? So the owls and I were friends at a very early age. I remember one startling me a little once. He passed from behind so close as almost to brush my cheek with his wings. Not a sound was heard, of course, for the passage of an owl and even the beats of his wings are absolutely noiseless. A moment after he curved up a little in his flight and then dropped like a stone almost—just as one sees a harrier do sometimes in the daylight—on to the hedge-bank at the side of the lane to emerge with something in his claw, a mouse or rat probably.

My early friends were specimens of the white or barn owl so well known all over western lands, *Strix flammea* of the scientists, a species which I have never seen in China, but which is, I believe, represented by a relative, *Strix candida*, well known in Formosa and Japan where it finds shelter, food, and home amongst long grass and reeds. I have referred to the superstitions respecting owls believed in by people of the West because the same phenomenon is found here in China, and if possible in an exaggerated form. The Chinese are even more given to belief in the absurdities of the past than Western people are, and it must be confessed that—when exact knowledge is lacking—there are ample grounds for fright, and plenty of apprehensions on which to base alarm, to scare people out of their wits, and make their very flesh creep, where owls are concerned. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* Sight and hearing both combine to aid in the "proofs" of a petrifying fearfulness which might otherwise be denied. One of the most dreaded of the causes of some of these hair-raising nocturnal alarms is one of the prettiest little species contained in the owl family—*Athene Whiteleyi*. Every sportsman knows him almost as well as he knows the local dove or blackbird. He is to be found in every second or third clump of bamboos near to villages, and here he may be watched by one who likes to approach warily during the day. Whiteley's owlet, as he is called, sits all bunched up during the sunlight, generally in the thickest part of the bamboo branches but sometimes out in clear sight on the branch of a tree. He looks, as he is, about the size of a man's closed fist with a fairly thick glove on. His colours are of the usual owl kind which range from the darkest of chocolate through all shades of browns and tawnies to grey and white. A tiny mite to be the object of so much dread! The "cat-headed-hawk," *mao-deu-ying*, is its colloquial village name near Shanghai, changing up north to "*mao-erh-tou*," the catheaded. One might shoot dozens on a trip of a fortnight or so, for not only will the short-sighted quarry

allow a close approach but its flight when flushed is by no means swift. *A. Whiteleyi* has a cousin which takes its place in North China and Manchuria. This is *A. Plumipes*, whose legs and feet are covered with down.

Altogether there are no fewer than 19 species of owls known to visit or live in the Chinese Empire. A third *Athene* is found in the mountainous parts of Formosa, which geographically, though no longer politically, we may still be permitted to name in connexion with China. *Strix coromanda*, or *Urrua coromanda* has been seen near Shanghai, and one specimen captured, a young bird in imperfect plumage. *Strix Hardwickii* or *Ketupa Ceylonensis* comes as far east as Hongkong, where it is known as an eater of crustacean and fish food. Many of the rest are little if at all known so far north as this, but are more or less common farther south and in the districts bordering on Burma and Tibet.

The two species of the genus *Otus* known in China deserve a little fuller notice. These are two of the so-called eared or horned owls, a name which they get from the possession of feather tufts springing from the vicinity of the ears, and more or less erectile at will. *Otus vulgatis*, or *Strix otus* is the long-eared owl. He is a fine handsome bird. His dense black pupil is surrounded by an iris of glowing yellow, and this again by a fringe of black-streaked brown feathers forming the centre of the characteristic circular disk of feathers round every owl's eye, the outer portion of the disk being much lighter in tint. Immediately over his eyes there rise the "horns" of tawny feathers streaked with black. Between the edges of the disks peeps out the point of a business-like short beak. The remaining parts of the body are coloured with the same tints but their mixture and mottling are such as Nature's needs alone could have produced. There is a tinge of blue on the upper surface of the middle tail feathers. Now and then the long-eared owl will come out to feed during the day, as some others of his kind will do. Then he has to run the gauntlet of all the little birds in the neighbourhood, whom many a time I have seen and heard on such occasions exercising all the bird Billingsgate they could lay their tongues to. *Otus vulgaris* is big enough to be an enemy to rabbits and young hares, besides rats, mice, voles, and small birds. Like his smaller friends, too, he varies his diet with a course or two of insect food. The female is sometimes 16 inches in length, her mate something less. None of the owls, so far as I know, ever disgrace themselves by eating carrion. They invariably kill their own food, and this makes them so very useful to farmers, since they destroy vast numbers of rats, mice, and voles which would otherwise do immense damage. Where,

owing to the mistaken enmity of keepers, they have been killed out, farms are sure to suffer. Where, on the contrary, there may be a sudden invasion of rodents, such as that of voles in Scotland not many years since, there will also—if permitted—be a corresponding invasion of owl to feed on them. The long-eared owl is known pretty nearly all over Europe and Asia, being sedentary in some places, in others migratory. It nests in trees, not infrequently occupying an old crow's nest in which to deposit its four or five round white eggs. Unlike most of the owl family the long-eared species is inclined to be sociable, during the winter especially, when in some countries little companies of a dozen or more may be seen together.

The short-eared owl is variously known as *Strix brachyotus, Otus brachyotus, Brachyotus palustris,* etc. It is about the same size as its long-eared relative, and much the same colour, though the tints are generally lighter. "*Brachy*" it might be noted, means short, and "*otus*," or "*ous*," an ear. This species also is sociable. It is migratory in England, where it spends the winter only, except in perhaps a few cases which nest in the northern counties. The short-eared owl is much more of a day bird, and may be seen hunting over fields and moors harrier fashion for food. Occasionally, it seems, it takes to rabbit burrows after the fashion of the burrowing species so well known in North America. Indeed it cares but little for trees, and prefers a life in close proximity to mother earth. Except for the robbery of an occasional game bird, partridge or grouse, the short-eared owl is a feeder on rodents and small wild birds. "There is no better friend to the farmer," is the verdict of a naturalist who knew. In a field which was known to be swarming with vermin, no fewer than 28 owls were once counted at one time. The nest of this species, like that of some others, is usually found on the ground hidden amongst grass, rushes, fern, or heather.

The owl family, with their big staring eyes both directed forward instead of sideways, as those of so many other birds are, with their fourth reversible toe, and their short stout beak, form an undoubted link between the parrots on one side and the hawks, falcons, and eagles on the other. They provide another example of that universal evolution which has ever been round us, but to which we were, and not infrequently are still, too often blind. The old teaching respecting special creations has had more lives than a cat, and still flourishes in certain quarters.

Chapter XLV.

OWLS—(*Concluded.*)

Mention, in the last chapter, of the relationship of owls with parrots reminds me that the *Psittacides*, to which family the parrots belong, have not even been referred to in the chats already published. There was, of course, a reason. In the first place China is not well represented in the parrot family. David enumerates but six species, all of which are of the smaller varieties, parroquets, etc. In the second place they are all confined to the warm south and are never seen in most of the Chinese provinces, and in the third, it is with regret that I have to confess to an utter ignorance of the whole tribe in the wild state. The connexion between the two families, owls and parrots, is however very closely seen still in New Zealand, where there is an owl-parrot whose whole life is spent on the ground, the wings through long disuse being almost useless. It is known from its cry as the "kakapo," and is a vegetable feeder. Therein it differs from the degenerate kea, also of New Zealand, which has abandoned its plant diet for an almost exclusive one of flesh. How this evolution has been reached is not exactly known, as there are various theories respecting it. There is no theory, unfortunately, but the most painful certainty, as to the manner in which it now seeks and obtains one of its pet luxuries—the fat on sheeps' kidneys. It alights on the back of its victim, and by means of its formidable beak proceeds to tear through the flesh until the delicacy is exposed. That eaten, the bird appears to be satisfied, and of course the sheep dies. Repetition of this practice makes the kea's depraved taste something of first consequence to the New Zealand rancher, and naturally the war is bitter.

Having made acquaintance with owls and parrots with interchangeable appetities from grass through flesh to fish and frogs, we may, with due apologies for the digression, continue the record of the remaining owls of China which deserve separate notice. There are one or two representatives of the genus *Scops*, but they call for no detailed description. There is also a representative of the *Surnia* class, one of which, *S. Passerina*, is a pretty little thing about the size of a quail, and with something of its colouring. Its food consists mainly of insects and mice.

Contrast this with the giant of the family—the great Eagle Owl, from twenty to twenty-eight inches in length and, to outward appearance, more than bulky in proportion. *Strix bubo*, or *Bubo maximus* is indeed a magnificent bird, and one can well imagine from an examination of specimens in the museum that there may be some truth in the belief held by many people that he is quite a match for the king of birds himself, the golden eagle. His beak is terrible: his talons even more so; the fact that the legs, and even the toes, are thickly feathered adding to their apparent massive strength. The horns of the eagle owl spread out horizontally, and are of firmer as well as longer structure than those of the "eared" owls before mentioned. The pupil of the eye is surrounded with a reddish orange iris, the blaze of which to victims seized in the dark must be particularly terrible. For the rest, the plumage is of the ordinary owl kind, brown, grey, tawny and chocolate being mingled with all the usual charm.

The bird is one of very wide range, being found in varieties or identical species in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. It is common in most parts of China, though the only live specimen which I have seen in this particular neighbourhood was one which lived in captivity, the property of a friend of mine who was naturally very proud of it. This bird escaped one night, and was heard on the roof of a friend's house, where the children were scared nearly out of their wits at the unwonted visitation. It is specially plentiful about the beginning of winter when probably moving into its winter quarters. There are many instances of its domestication. Indeed owls as a class are by no means hard to tame, and are sometimes found useful in the destruction of rats and mice. When caught young or taken from the nest, the young birds continue to have the full support of their parents if left in a cage or hen-coop to which the old birds have access, the food brought, it has been noticed, being very frequently young game birds, partridges, pheasants, etc.

The strength of the eagle owl is such that no game smaller than deer are secure from his attacks, and even young fawns are sometimes killed, hares, pheasants, and others of the larger game birds being amongst the most frequent victims, though like many other birds of its kind, its larder is frequently replenished from less lordly sources, crows, rooks, snakes, lizards, frogs, and even fish and insects being drawn on to meet the demands of a very healthy appetite. The smaller of these disappear holus-bolus, the larger are torn easily into assimilable pieces by the powerful beak.

The cry of the eagle owl varies with the occasion. It has been likened to the bark of a small dog. At other times

it is a hoot, the syllables used to represent it changing with the keenness of the listener's ear. We thus have "hoo-hoo" from one naturalist, "boo-boo" from another, and "poo-hoo" from a third. But that is not all, the bark and the hooing may be varied by a screech, especially from the female and during the breeding season, whilst, brought to close quarters, either male or female is possessed of a very vicious hiss, and a suggestive snapping of the beak which is of a particularly warning nature. The note of the young birds varies between a hissing and a piping tone. Two or three form the broods, and they are hatched, in common with those of the young of the whole family, from white rounded eggs. The nesting place varies according to circumstances. Either rocks or trees may be selected, or old ruins, and even occasionally, as though to emphasize the connexion between these and the burrowing owls, a hollow in the ground. Usually the same site is kept to year after year, if the birds are left undisturbed; and the nest is large, composed of branches, sticks, twigs, etc. lined with leaves, moss, or other soft material.

The male of the eagle owl weighs about seven pounds, twice the weight of an ordinary well-fed cock-pheasant. To carry so heavy a body and also the weight of its prey, which may easily double its own, the wings are very large and powerful, expanding to a length of something over five feet. The female is sometimes as much as a pound more in weight than her lord and master—if such a term is applicable among the raptores, which is much to be doubted. She is somewhat longer, also, and has darker tints. The young are quite white at first.

There is a Central Asian variety of *Bubo maximus*, which is known as *B. Turcomanus*. I am unable to say with certainty whether our eastern representative belongs to the European or to the Central Asian variety, or whether both are represented. The chief difference seems to be that the latter is somewhat paler in colour. Colour, however, depends so much on climatic conditions allied to special states of environment that it counts for little in determining species. The same bird takes on quite a different appearance when removed to widely different conditions, and experiments have proved that colouring can be changed almost at will if suitable means are at hand.

Barry Sullivan's well known song will serve as a fitting close to these notes. I quote two verses:

In the hollow tree, in the old grey tower
The spectral owl doth dwell:
Dull, hated, despised in the sunshine hour,
But at dusk he's abroad and well!

Not a bird of the forest e'er mates with him,
All mock him outright by day;
But at night, when the woods grow still and dim,
The boldest will shrink away.
Oh, when the night falls, and roosts the fowl,
Then, then is the reign of the hornéd owl.

Mourn not for the owl, nor his gloomy plight!
The owl, hath his share of good.
If a prisoner he be in the broad daylight,
He is lord in the dark greenwood.
Nor lonely the bird, nor his ghostly mate;
They are each unto each a pride:
Thrice fonder, perhaps, since a strange dark fate
Hath rent them from all beside.
So when the night falls and dogs do howl,
Sing ho! for the reign of the hornéd owl!
We know not alway
Who are kings by day,
But the king of the night is the bold, brown owl!

Since these chats began we have followed our feathered friends through the course of a revolving year. We began with the migrants going north. These have now come back once more, and during the period of their absence we have had the pleasure of seeing those which love the sun and bask in its warmth. They too have gone—for a while. The trees are bare; the woods are silent. Only the bulbul and the myna just now enliven us with their chatter or their warble as the case may be, for as the Chinese poet says,

The sedge is withered from the lake,
And no bird sings.

Yet the days are lengthening. Spring is promised once again, and then—*da capo!*

Chapter XLVI.

CHINESE FIELD SPORTS.

As a link connecting the chapters on birds with those on mammals and other wild animals, some account of the sporting practices of the Chinese, amongst whom may be included Mongols, Manchus, etc., will be of interest. In up-country trips from Shanghai we see little if anything of this sort. Possibly the doctrine of the sacredness of life, so strenuously held by the devout Buddhist, may have something to do with the scarcity of Chinese sportsmen, but the probability is that more material reasons have greater weight. No ordinary country farmer can afford to purchase a gun for himself or his son, and if he could, cartridges at the rate of six cents each or, as he would count them, at sixty cash, would be such a constant reminder of the drain on his exchequer, that the weapon would soon disappear. "Bang went saxpence," the thrifty Scotsman's complaint respecting his expenses before he had been twenty-four hours in London, would provide a very inadequate laconism for his Chinese counterpart. Hence it is that the parties of country sportsmen met with are few and far between. It occasionally happens that a man here and there gets the use of a gingal for a day or so and then, with a few charges of powder and anything suitable as substitutes for shot, he will sally forth, perhaps accompanied by half a dozen village admirers and as many "wonks," in the hope of more execution than the upshot is likely to record. On these occasions, judging from my own experience of what I have seen, the methods employed are far too noisy and ill-conducted to secure game even if the marksman had western weapons and knew how to shoot. The more the shouting and commotion the more the game expected. Reeds are violently beaten and dogs sent into covers in such a manner as effectually to scare any bird or beast away from, rather than towards, the gunner.

Very different is the method of the man who knows—the professional shot who either from sheer love of the chase, or for the living to be got from the disposal of the game secured, spends his days in scouring the countryside for whatever in the form of edible life may come

within reach of his weapon, and so be transferred to his bag if he is entirely afoot, or to the little "hold" of his tiny punt if he have one. That depends on the nature of the country he is in. I have sometimes allowed fancy to place this type of man somewhat apart from the ordinary countryman. At times he looks as if his pedigree would, if one could only trace it, show him to be of different stock. It would be a most interesting thing if somebody, well versed in the language, well acquainted with wild life, and equally keen in sport, could make a study of the life history of the professional purveyor of Chinese game. It would not surprise me in the least if it were discovered that in many instances these men have a strain of aboriginal blood in them. There is quite an un-Chinese cast of countenance to be seen amongst them at times, and their wiry frames, hard as nails and tireless as those of wolves, suggest something different even from the villager. The eyes are keen, the aspect alert, and the impression conveyed to the observer is something different from that of the stereotyped character of the ordinary rustic. The nearest western type I can think of is a gipsy given to poaching in a quiet sort of way.

Moreover, this man can shoot. It is a never-ending source of wonder how he does it—but he does. His weapon is an iron barrel, with no pretensions to finish, fitted to a moderately thick, roughly cut stock bent something like the handle of a walking stick, or a block-letter L. It varies in length, but I do not remember seeing any less than about six feet. As a rule there is no nipple, and breech-loading is, of course, a thing unknown. Consequently there must be the old-fashioned "pan" for powder outside the "touch" hole. This is let off by means of a slow burning match of vegetable fibre attached to the stock. Army gingals sometimes attain a length of fourteen feet, and need three men for their manipulation. Some of them have been modernized, with nipples, and even breech-loading attachments in some cases. But, of course, the sporting gingal is a one man weapon, muzzle-loading, and fired either from a rest on the ground, or from the hip standing. An old friend of mine, a keen sportsman, and a fair shot, now alas gone over to the majority, used to delight in telling his experiences with native sportsmen whom he had met during his many up-country excursions. Sometimes when both foreigner and native were in the humour, they would work together, the foreigner keen to see the methods employed by his native companion, the latter full of admiration for the finish, the handiness, and the easy manipulation of the foreign weapon. When results came to be compared, however, my friend said that the gingal quite held its own, even if it did not emerge

a winner. On several occasions he had "his eye wiped" by his antediluvian companion. The native is never tired of watching the working of really good foreign dogs. He usually has a canine companion of his own, but there does not seem to have ever been the same amount of teaching devoted to him as there has to the British spaniel, setter, pointer or retriever, never enough, that is to say, to be passed on from generation to generation. But, as we shall see, the native dog is capable of a training suited to the circumstances, and I have myself seen them work thick cover very thoroughly. There seems to be no special breed used. Sometimes it is one of the purely native varieties, sometimes, in these days, a cross between native and foreign. The last of the kind which I have seen was a brindled dog showing evident traces of the bull terrier in his build. He belonged to a sport who was accompanied by a small boy, the pair travelling along the creeks in a tiny punt in the bottom of which there were a teal and a hen pheasant. A moment after I met them, the dog put out of an almost bare grave-mound, which I had just passed, a woodcock which got right into the middle of the gingal discharge and was killed in very sportsman-like style. The use of the boat gives the hunter in delta lands an immense advantage over the foreign shot who has to "go round" perhaps a mile or more to a bridge every half hour or so. What these market purveyors get for their bag I have never been able to find out exactly, but it may be taken for granted that the the prices of the Shanghai market, with its fifty, sixty, seventy cents each for hares, pheasants, and woodcocks respectively, are not for them.

Into other Chinese methods of shooting and trapping game, it is not the intention here to enter. The reader will find first hand information respecting this most interesting topic in Mr. Wade's new edition of "With Boat and Gun in the Yangtze Valley," where it will also be seen that native sportsmen's attention is not confined to feathered game, but is given equally to other wild life, including the highly dangerous, but better paying quarry, the royal tiger himself, of whom more anon. There is, however, a recent experience of Mr. Wade's which, with his permission, I wish to rescue from the pages of "The North China Daily News" where comparatively few will see it again. It deals with a phase in native dog-training and gingal work which is apparently new to everybody. In the graphic words of the writer, the story runs thus:—

"The third incident we witnessed occurred at the well known Shapa, or lower barrier. A native shooter had his gingal with him—a most uncanny looking weapon. That there should be no question as to its length, it was placed upright alongside myself, and towered above my head two feet

two inches (measured), which would make the piece of ordnance over eight feet in length. It weighed 18 catties. We foreigners sometimes growl at the 6½ to 7½ lb. guns usually weigh. Fancy having to carry a twenty-four pounder, which was what this man did all day long and every day in the week! He was accompanied by a small weird-looking animal, a most unpresentable little wonk, on whom he laid great store. Curiosity impelled us to take a look at man and dog at work, and what we saw made such an impression upon us that we thought some little record of it might interest others. To cut a long story short this is briefly what we saw. A hen pheasant happened to drop into a furrowed field at feeding time. We saw her distinctly running up and down in search of food. The native took her bearings, crept up as closely as he safely could, deposited his gun on a bit of higher ground, and kept it trained on the bird. Meantime, the dog lay down across the barrel of the gun as a screen for his master. The psychological moment arrived, the gun was fired, the bird was killed upon the ground, and the dog remained upon the barrel until his master took the gun up to reload it. Now this doubtless reads very much like romance, but it is a fact that can be attested by three eye-witnesses."

We must leave to a succeeding chapter some account of other aspects of Chinese field sports, including Tartar and Chinese falconry, which dates from very early times indeed, and is still in vogue, though, of course, in parts of the Empire where the multitudinous creek, so common in the deltas of the Si Kiang, the Yangtze, and the Yellow Rivers, are unknown. The great plains of the north are the natural home of such sport, and it is there that we shall find it in all its charm and vivacity.

Chapter XLVII.

CHINESE FIELD SPORTS.—*(Continued.)*

We have again and again had occasion to remark on the immensity of the Chinese Empire and the fact that since it covers areas visited by Arctic cold and torrid heat it could hardly fail to be the home of widely differing species of beasts and birds. This is no less true from a hunting than from a scientific point of view. Beasts of the chase are almost as diversified as we have seen the birds to be but, unfortunately, the mammals, as a whole, have not as yet found either a Swinhoe, a David, or a Styan to devote himself and his scientific qualifications to them and to them alone. There is ample space for some enthusiast to make a name for all time by filling the gap thus indicated. The same remark applies to the reptiles of the Empire, and perhaps less so to the insects, which have, however, found in Mr. Donovan a delineator of great ability.

References in old accounts of hunting in China show how rich the field is. One of the most interesting of these we proceed to quote from Rankin's "Historical Researches," as given in an "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports" published in the "fifties." "The Chinese Emperor Kamhi" *(sic)*, says the story, "gave a hunting entertainment in his park near Peking to the Russian ambassador. After hunting till nearly four, we came to the top of an artificial hill, where were tents for the Imperial family; after dinner, the Emperor sent to the ambassador to inform him that three tigers would be baited for his amusement; preparations being first made to secure the principal spectators from danger by ranks of guards armed with spears. The first tiger was let out of his cage by a man on a fleet horse, who opened the door by means of a rope, and then rode off. The tiger came out, rolled on the grass, then growled, and walked about. The Emperor fired bullets with his matchlock, but was too distant: he then sent the Russian ambassador to try his gun, who advancing within ten paces, shot the tiger dead. The second tiger was then let out, and rolled on the grass like the first. A man, to rouse him to action, shot at him with a blunt arrow. He pursued the man, who narrowly escaped by the fleetness of his horse, and the tiger attempted

to leap over the ranks of the guards but was killed by them. The third, when loose, at once made towards the Emperor's tents, and was quickly despatched with the soldiers' spears. This Emperor used to hunt tigers in their native woods in his youth, but being now sixty, he refrained from pursuing them beyond this immense forest, which is enclosed for many miles extent with a high wall of brick. It contains, besides tigers, leopards, lynxes, boars, deer, hares, partridges, quails, and pheasants. The Emperor was surrounded by his sporting establishment, and close to him was the master of the chase with greyhounds. The grand falconer was also present with his hawks, many of which were as white as doves, with only one or two black feathers in their wings or tails; these came from Siberia. They generally raked the pheasants flying; but if the pheasants escaped to the reeds or bushes, they nevertheless soon caught them."

This graphic picture serves to show that in sport, as in so many other things, human nature is human nature wherever found. The sports just described have for generations had their counterpart in royal circles in Europe. The German princes of the past vied with each other in offering to distinguished guests just such entertainment as was thought fitting by Kanghi. They had no tigers or leopards, unless some could be specially imported for the occasion, but lynxes, bears, and boars there were in plenty, and in the current issue of "Country Life" there may be seen reproductions of old pictures showing especially how herds of deer were enclosed within a circular fence round which they rushed, the Coburg sportsmen standing in the centre and showing their skill by bringing down their helpless game. We should hardly consider it the highest form of sport in these days.

But one reference in Rankin's citation shows that the hardy Manchu was no feather-bed sportsman: the Emperor had been used "to hunt tigers in their native woods in his youth." There is no need to consider this as a mere piece of court flattery. It is quite likely to be literally true, for the Manchu before his degenerate days began, before luxury of every kind and the sapping of virility in the harem had made him a byword for flabby obesity, before in short his military qualities had been undermined by luxurious ease and plenty, was a man of the truest physical kind, upstanding, strong, and bold. He was a man of the plains and hardly less so, when occasion required, of the mountains. He combined almost equally the qualities of both, for whilst in his native haunts there were illimitable distances over which he could scamper on his sturdy ponies,

the ancestors of those noble little beasts which do such wonders in Shanghai paper hunts, he had in other portions of his territory to be not less effective as a climber. Northern Manchuria is a Manchu Switzerland. It is true it has no peaks equal to Mt. Blanc, but it has mountains of quite respectable height, and is provided with wooded cover of vast extent. The traveller along the Vladivostok-Harbin section of the Siberian line is delighted with the ever changing vista of hill scenery presented as the road winds its way round the foot or along the slopes of these hills. It was here, doubtless, that much of the marvellous Manchu archery which was destined to be one of the main causes of the overthrow of the Chinese armies, had its birth. Hunting would alternate with war, and both combined would naturally provide just the type of hardy, fearless, well-trained, skilful soldier who would think nothing of meeting the comparatively effeminate Chinese in a disproportion of ten to one. There is no question but that at his best the Manchu must have been a fine fellow, as indeed some have been within our own recollection. San-ko-lin-sin, the Manchu general, was one. He was beloved of the British "Tommy" in 1860 because it was firmly believed that he was no Manchu at all, but a Sam Collinson who, as a renegade, had by his innate qualities risen to be Commander in Chief of the Huangti's troops. Jung Lu was another still of our own times. His attitude during the Boxer madness was just the attitude that we should have expected a Roberts or a Kitchener to have adopted under like circumstances.

But Manchu sport is not the only type of sport known within the wide range of the Celestial Empire. We have seen how the native markets are supplied with game. We might extend this portion of our enquiry to include the capture of waterfowl, but we have already referred the reader to "With Boat and Gun" for information under this head. There is, however, not a little wild hunting amongst the slopes on the roof of the world, in Tibet. If favoured by ordinary good luck the sportsman may come across troops of the wild horse or ass, *Equus hemionus*, made famous by Pallas. This animal is about the build of a moderate-size pony, and may be considered a link between the horse and the ass, the tail being more nearly like that of the latter. "Kyang" as they are called have been found in troops of from twenty to a hundred. Mountain sheep and goats, ibex, bears, wolves, foxes, etc. are found amongst the lofty solitudes of the northern slopes of the mighty Himalayas. In Lord Ronaldshay's "Sport and Politics under an Eastern Sky," we find illustrations of heads of the *Nyan*, a mountain sheep with fine curving horns, the *Goa*, or Tibetan gazelle with a pair of

daintily curved goat-like horns, the *Napoo* or Burhel, with horns that spread out before they recurve; also one of the Tibetan antelope with a head reminding one of some of those African antelopes, forming a beautiful curving V over the head of the bearer. We learn, moreover, that there are still to be found herds of wild yak, amongst which at times there are immense bulls. The Tibetan sportsman is another modern survival of the ancient Mongol race when at its best. He is essentially a man of the mountains, accustomed to breathe a rarified atmosphere at or below zero. His sight is equal to that of the wild Indian or the South African hunter. He is all muscle, what there is of him, except such parts as are composed of fine strong bone. Not an ounce of superfluous flesh is to be found on him. Indeed it would probably be impossible to find adipose tissue anywhere in Tibet, except perhaps within the holy precincts of the richest lamaseries.

One does not generally turn to Blue-books for details of sport, but there is so little that is authentic known of the inner life of Tibet that I have been glad to ransack the Blue-book dealing with Tibetan matters which was published in 1904. Therein, in the diary kept by Capt. W. F. O'Connor, who was on duty with the Younghusband mission, we find several references to wild life, and to game shot by naturalists and others. Amongst the animals mentioned are the wolf, the lynx, the *Goa*, above referred to, burhel, the kyang, or wild ass, the *Ovis ammon*, a magnificent wild sheep, hares, partridges, lammergeier Brahmini ducks, etc. To some of these it will be necessary to return in later chapters, as also to the whole subject of falconry to which in times gone by the Mongol races devoted much attention

Chapter XLVIII.

CHINESE FIELD SPORTS.—*(Concluded.)*

One naturally turns to Marco Polo to see if that romantic old observer has anything to say respecting Wild Life in China, and the reference is not without result. There is a passing notice, *en route*, to falcons in Persia. "They are smaller than the peregrine falcon: reddish about the breast, belly, and under the tail: and their flight is so swift that no bird can escape them." At Changa-nor, which sounds Tibetan, he finds cranes, pheasants, partridges, and other birds, with gerfalcons and hawks in use for sports. Speaking of the Grand Khan's hunting establishment, that of Kublai, he tells how boars, stags, fallow deer, roebucks, and bears were killed by being surrounded by a large circle of hunters who gradually converged. Dogs and arrows were then used. Leopards and lynxes were kept for the chase, "also many lions which are larger than the Babylonian lions." "It is an admirable sight, when the lion is let loose in pursuit of an animal, to observe the savage eagerness and speed with which he overtakes it." In all probability the word "lion" has been wrongly used in this connexion, the animal employed being probably a hunting leopard or a cheetah. "His Majesty has eagles also, which are trained to stoop at wolves, and such is their strength that none, however large, can escape from their talons." (Chap XIV, Travels of Marco Polo.)

Another old, but more recent authority, is the interesting folio volume of travels and descriptions of China published in 1671 by the East India Company, a copy of which has very kindly been lent to me by Mr. Browett. In the section dealing with wild life there, we find that the province of Huquang was reputed to be noted for its deer, that there were wolves in Shantung, bears in Shensi, with wild bulls, leopards, etc. amongst the hills. Szechwan boasted a kind of rhinoceros, whilst "Elephants which are seen in most parts of China, are all brought out of the provinces of Yunnan and Quangsi, where they breed in great numbers, the inhabitants making use of them in time of war." (This, with some other naïve statements may be taken with the customary grain of salt.) Chekiang was a province full of tigers, some of which, on Mt. Ku-tien, "do no hurt to men," and even wild ones brought

there immediately become tame! Tigers and leopards are also mentioned as common in Yunnan and Quangsi. Boars with tusks a foot and a half long tear men to pieces. There were baboons in Szechwan. The musk deer was well known.

I have met with no mention of falconry in this interesting volume. The birds which most occupied the attention of the compilers seem to have been those of a fabulous nature, but the cormorant, owing to its use in fishing, greatly interested everybody. We have to hark back to Marco Polo for early descriptions of Chinese falconry. In his fifteenth chapter he tells us that the Court was furnished daily with "a thousand pieces of game, quails excepted." To aid in the capture of this immense quantity no fewer than 5,000 hunting dogs were employed. When a grand hunting excursion was made into the northern wilds, the Grand Khan was attended "by full ten thousand falconers, who carry with them a vast number of gerfalcons, peregrine falcons, and sakers, as well as many vultures (?), in order to pursue the game along the bank of the river." (It is thought this means the Sungari or the Ussuri.) Bands of from 200 or more hunters wandered separately in these excursions. "Every bird belonging to His Majesty, or to any of his nobles, has a small silver label fastened to its leg, on which is engraved the name of the keeper." His Majesty the Khan seems to have carried hunting luxury to a height unknown even in India. Not satisfied with one elephant to carry him, which, however, he was compelled to use in the narrow passes of the Manchurian hills, he more often had two or four on the backs of which there was placed a platform sheltered by a canopy which could be thrown back when cranes appeared in the sky and the falcons were flown at them. Storks, swans, herons, and a variety of other birds were taken, "the excellence and the extent of the sport being greater than it is possible to express." It is curious to find laws relating to the keeping of hawks, etc. common to China and the West. The old Venetian tells us. "It is strictly forbidden to every tradesman, mechanic, or husbandman throughout His Majesty's dominions, to keep a vulture, hawk, or any other bird used for the pursuit of game, or any sporting dog: nor is a nobleman or cavalier to presume without permission to chase beast or bird in the neighbourhood of the place where His Majesty takes up his residence." In England no priest might fly anything more noble than a sparrow-hawk. Neither prince, nobleman, nor peasant might kill game of any kind between March and October, a law which China might once more, with great profit, replace on the list of actively enforced statutes.

Whether falconry travelled westwards from China, or whether it was the spontaneous suggestion of nature to many

minds in many climes about the same time can never be known. It is certain, however, that all countries of the past have fallen victims to its charms, and that in many it has never died out. It is still a pastime in India and Persia; it is being widely revived in England, and is one of the commonest of outdoor sports amongst the Chinese, Manchus, and Mongols generally. In the west, ladies took part in it. Scott in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" tells how—

> The ladye by the altar stood,
> Of sable velvet her array,
> And on her head a crimson hood,
> With pearls embroidered and entwined,
> Guarded with gold, with ermine lined.
> A merlin sat upon her wrist,
> Held by a leash of silken twist.

It may be noted that whilst there is no doubt that the Chinese have used, and do use, eagles in the chase, the same birds have never, so far as I know, been so employed in England. One objection was their weight. A sporting abbess of olden days says they were not to be "enlured nor reclaimed, because they be too ponderous to the *perch portatif*," that is to say they were too heavy to be carried on the wrist. Possibly the Mongols got over the difficulty by carrying them on horseback till wanted, as a hunting leopard is sometimes carried.

The following list of technical terms used in the nomenclature of falconry will be interesting:—

Of long-winged hawks, etc., there are—

The gerfalcon,	of which the	male	is called the jerkin.
„ falcon,	„	„	tierce gentle.
„ lanner,	„	„	lanneret.
„ bockerel,	„	„	bockeret.
„ saker,	„	„	sackerel.
„ merlin,	„	„	jack-merlin.
„ hobby,	„	„	jack or robin.

Of short-winged hawks, etc., there are—

The eagle,	of which the	male	is called the iron.
„ goshawk	„	„	tiercel.
„ sparrow-hawk	„	„	musket.
„ kestrel	„	„	jack-kestrel.

Over and above these, technical falconry is replete with terms to designate hawks in the various stages of their growth and training. The criterion of stupidity in some of the southern countries to this day is inability to distinguish between "a hawk and a hand-saw," where the latter term is, of course, a modern corruption of "hernshaw", an old sporting name for the heron.

But our topic is China, not England, and we turn once more to that. In Swinhoe's ornithological notes made at Chefoo, we find reference to the osprey, the peregrine, merlin, kestrel, Eastern red-legged falcon, black-eared kite, goshawk, sparrow-hawk, and Stevenson's hawk, amongst diurnal birds of prey. "A female sparow-hawk", he says, "was brought to me on the wrist by a native. He was training it for hawking." Again he writes, "Throughout May in my country rambles, I would frequently meet natives carrying hawks on their wrists. This species (Stevenson's) was in the greatest request. . . I once came upon a man actually engaged in hawking." Of hawks used in falconry in N. China, Père David mentions the following: the golden eagle, goshawk, Stevenson's hawk, the sparrow-hawk, the saker, called the "yellow hawk" by the Pekingese, the peregrine, and the hobby, a list which covers the whole range of flying sport from the capture of the smallest birds to that of wolf, gazelle, antelope, and deer. On foot and on horseback hunters roam the country to indulge in their favourite sport. It is impossible to imagine anything more exhilarating in any form of chase than the pursuit of prey on horseback aided by well trained birds. A recent illustration in one of the British illustrated papers brings home this fact in a most attractive fashion. The quarry there was a fox, the "hawk" employed, an eagle. There we have the cunning of the quadruped matched against the speed of the feathered pursuer, whose human and four-footed allies are straining their utmost to keep up. Polo is unquestionably an excellent game, and horsemen rightly delight in it. But what is polo compared with this wild chase, helter-skelter over illimitable plains, through an atmosphere which stimulates like champagne, and with the gratification of the hunting instinct thrown in, the prey at times as dangerous as the wolf can be, at others as swift as a frightened antelope? Surely this must be the acme of hunting delight, and it is no wonder that the Mongols and Manchus have kept it alive. The only thing it lacks is the music of the hounds.

Chapter XLIX.

TIGERS.

There is no need to tell the old China hand that there are tigers in the Celestial Empire, and plenty of them, though to this day, except in the travelled classes and amongst those with time to devote to sport, the great majority of foreigners are not a little surprised to hear that there are tigers anywhere except in India and its immediate surroundings. The old notion that the tiger is essentially an animal of the tropics has been hard to eradicate, whereas the truth is, in all probability, that "Stripes" is comparatively a recent intruder into India from cooler parts of the continent. Even yet he has not succeeded in getting into Ceylon. Certain it is that he "feels the heat" as much as any foreigner, so much so that he will lower himself, during the hot season and in the hope of getting cool, to such an extent as to wallow like a water buffalo in shallow pools and marshy mud, a thing which in cooler climes no self-respecting tiger would ever think of doing. As a matter of fact the tiger is known from the southern slopes of the Caucasus right across the continent to the shores of Sakhalin, with the exception of the higher portions of the Tibetan plateau where, either because the cover is insufficient or the food supply scarce, the royal beast is not to be found. And I have been assured, by men who ought to know, that the finest of all the family are not those of the scorching plains and tropical jungles of India, but those of northern Korea, Manchuria, and South Siberia. An old friend of mine who was accustomed, in addition to other business, to buy all the tiger skins he could lay hands on, used to point with much pride to a skin which served for his private office hearth rug. It was, he said, the largest he had ever seen, and it measured 13ft. 3in. This is a matter which will have to be considered later. I mention it here because this particular skin was from a northern animal, either Manchurian or Siberian.

To the Chinese, naturally, the tiger has been known for ages. I do not remember any reference to, or description of, the tiger in either of the books of Confucius or Mencius, but the "Book of Odes," the *Shi King*, which is older than either, has numerous references to that animal. An officer

of Wei, half in sorrow, half in scorn, laments the petty services required of him, although as he says, "A tiger's strength I have." Of the celebrated archer, Shuh-twan it is said:

"A tiger fierce his nervous hands
Grapple and soon subdue."

But, asks another poet. "Who dares unarmed the tiger face?" Such references might be added to, and others relating to the tiger's skin and its use for mats, for bow-cases, etc. are to be found.

Notes of my own, collected during the reading of years contain the following references:—

In January, 1875, there was killed near Ningpo, within five miles of the city gate a tiger which had caused the death of two men. Mr. Forrest, then British Consul there, gave some details of its measurements. Its length was 8ft. 2in., girth, 4ft. 4in., and its canine teeth were 3 inches long. Archdeacon Moule in his chapter in Mr. Wade's book, "With Boat and Gun," says, "Three times within my memory have royal tigers visited the immediate vicinity of Ningpo, though their chief home is amongst the mountains of Taichow." I once spent a month wandering amongst the hilly country known best as the Snowy Valley and Ta-lan Shan districts some 40 miles inland from Ningpo, but it was not my good fortune to meet with anything more remarkable than numbers of beautiful birds.

In 1880, there was a tiger killed near Hangchow. It was brought to bay by an arrow shot, and afterwards took shelter in a cave. It is said to have weighed 300 catties, and was sold for $140, the natives having the strongest belief in the efficacy of certain portions of the carcase if eaten or taken as medicine. The fierce nature of the beast is supposed to be reproduced in the bravery of the consumer, and this, of course, is particularly desired by military officers and the like.

I have a note respecting a tiger which leaped into a yard in Newchwang and seized a pig, which it dropped when fired at. In some parts of Manchuria there are said to be simple minded country people who believe the story that tigers refrain from attacking human beings, "because the Emperor has issued an Edict forbidding such a thing." However true that may be of the tigers of Manchuria, there is a different tale to tell in the Canton delta, where tigers are quite plentiful wherever they can find suitable cover, for there in one year, in about two months, no fewer than 20 people fell victims to man-eaters.

Tigers are also common in the neighbourhood of Fuchow. One was killed close to the west gate in 1894. It also was a man-eater, and had carried a man to its den one day. Next day, it was tempted out by the bait of a live goat and shot. At Kuliang, the beautiful summer resort for Fuchow

ladies, and lying within a few hours' travel of Fuchow, stories of tigers are plentiful, and in July 1897 a beautifully marked young tigress was shot there. She measured seven feet eleven inches, and weighed 205 lb. The year 1894 was a record year for tiger finds. A young one was caught alive on the hills near Canton, the lucky owner wanting $100 for it, though it weighed only about 20 catties. About the same time two full-grown ones were shot within two miles of the British boundary of Kowloon. During 1895, tigers were reported on the Ta-lung Shan near Nanking, where it was said that oxen, deer, and boars were killed and eaten by them.

These records, all comprised within a period of less than a quarter of a century, and taken hap-hazard, help to prove that tigers are very widely spread throughout the Chinese Empire. Unfortunately there has been no Selous, Blanford, or Sanderson to do for China what they have done for Africa and India, and the consequence is that there is more ignorance than exact knowledge of the condition of China with respect to big game generally, and tigers in particular. It is a great pity that it should be so but, of course, the difficulties are considerable. India is as safe from human attack as an English country, almost, whilst in really savage Africa men took their defence into their own hands. China is not altogether safe, especially during periods of special anti-foreign feeling, and hunters would not dream of carrying out their sport at the expense of war. But it would be an excellent thing if some young Manchu or Chinese gentlemen with sufficient influence could arrange hunting excursions into the wilder parts of the Empire as a whole and take with them some English gentlemen and naturalists in order that our knowledge of the fauna of the country might be added to. As it is, I know of no book dealing adequately with the subject of the mammalia of the Chinese Empire. Richard's "Comprehensive Geography" is the most authentic that I am acquainted with, but its knowledge is the knowledge of missionaries and travellers rather than of hunters and trained naturalists. In all probability there are very few of the provinces of China which, if properly examined in the most likely districts, would not provide ample reward, and very few indeed in which at one time or another "Mr. Stripes" would not be found at home.

The term "royal" as applied to the tiger, may possibly have been suggested by China, where the people know him as the king or prince of the cat tribe owing to the character 王 (*wang*) which is to be seen on his forehead. His appearance is too well known to need description, but only those who have had close experience in hunting him can tell of the wondrous perfection of his protective colouring. I remember

reading of an instance. Two hunters were going through a fringe of jungle land when one of them stopped dead and said to the other, "Look, there's a tiger!" "Where?" asked the other. "There, don't you see him," said the first pointing at the same time to a clump of reeds only a very few yards distant. But the second man could see nothing but reeds. Nor did he, till a movement of the beast, who was beginning to be uneasy under the direct look of the human eye, showed his shape. Then the wonder was—just as it is in a puzzle picture—how anyone could possibly have missed seeing him. The fact, however, remains, that not merely man, but even the keen-sighted denizens of the jungle such as deer, antelopes, boars, and the like are also unable to distinguish the alternate tawny and black stripes, so perfectly do they resemble the dried up yellow reed stalks and the dark shadows between. It seems doubtful whether China suffers in her manhood from tigers to the extent that India does. If she does, we do not hear of it. In India the loss of human life due to this cause is tremendous. Whole districts are depopulated sometimes, first owing to the number of deaths, a single man-eater having been known to kill nearly 100 persons in a year, and then by the abandonment of the group of villages near which the terror resides. Much of this is due to a superstition from which the Chinese are practically exempt. The Indian fears to kill a tiger. There is nothing the Chinese like better. Alive, a tiger takes toll of flocks and herds: dead, he pays all the taxes for a decade. Hence, probably a Chinese "man-eater" has short shrift. Even bounty for killing tigers in India will not tempt some natives to compass their death, so strong are superstitious beliefs connected with them.

Chapter L.

TIGERS.—*(Continued.)*

I have already said that our knowledge of the Chinese, Korean, Manchurian, and Siberian tigers is but scanty, and I repeat that it is a pity some influential native has not arranged for more or less scientific hunting parties in districts worth the trouble. It is not now as once it was. Scores of rich natives speak English well, and it should not be difficult to get up parties of men from the two nationalities to undertake the interesting task of studying "Stripes" in his Chinese haunts. As it is, we have to go to India for exact knowledge. There British officers on leave, and Maharajahs fond of field sports are our main authorities. Their experience is widespread and extends over a long series of years. It does not, of course, bear out all the exaggerated dimensions of heated imaginations. The tiger which is "as big as an elephant—almost"—does not exist. At least, if he does, he has never been brought to bag. The tape measure applied from nose to tip of tail within a few minutes of the fatal shot is no respecter of fancies. Inch by inch it reads off the feet, and soon the tale is told. What looked so immense to the tyro fails very frequently to reach even 9 ft, and he is an immense tiger—in India—which gets into double figures and totals ten. One shot by the Maharajah of Cooch Behar measured 10 ft. 1½ in. Another, of 10 ft. 5 in., was the largest which the same sportsman had met within 37 years' shooting. On the Assam frontier one of 10 ft. 6 in. was bagged on one occasion, but the record Indian size, measured before skinning, reached a length of 10 ft. 7 in. The measurement of 12 ft. 2 in. mentioned in Rowland Ward's book refers probably to the skin, which stretches considerably under manipulation. When one turns from these figures to those of the record 13 ft. 3 in. skin mentioned in the last chapter, there is a good deal of room for question. Although this was a skin which I saw with my own eyes, I am not by any means suggesting that when alive its original owner stood anything like that size. There are tricks of the trade which go beyond stretching, and these may have been applied in that particular instance. But when all necessary allowance has been made for this, the

animal must have been an extremely fine one, in all probability considerably bigger than the 10ft. 7in. record. To settle such questions should be as interesting as it would be an instructive task. With the proper backing, tiger hunting in all parts of the Chinese Empire ought to be but little more expensive than it is in India. What is wanted to ensure its being properly carried out is sufficient interest in high circles. There are surely enough manly and sporting Manchus to jump at such a chance.

Another matter which needs settling is the question of weight. This does not altogether depend on length, for instances are known of extremely heavy tigers which have shown comparatively meagre figures under the tape. The average height of a well-grown, full-sized tiger—we are referring again to the Indian—is from 3ft. 6in. to 3ft. 8in. the tigress being usually smaller and lighter. It will be remembered that the Chinese notes already given speak of a lightly built tigress at Kuliang weighing 205 lb. and of a tiger killed near Hangchow which weighed 300 catties, say 400 lb. These are small when compared with the heaviest reported from India, where from 400 to 450 lb. is considered to be the average weight of a full-grown animal. Others of much greater weight have been recorded. One of the large ones mentioned above weighed 504 lb. That which measured 10 ft. 1½ in. weighed 600 lb. whilst the record weight given by Rowland Ward is 700 lb. A vast difference is made of course, if the tiger is killed immediately after he has gorged himself.

We should naturally look for a great deal of difference between the pelt of an Indian tiger and that of one having North Manchuria or Siberia for its habitat. It has already been mentioned that the tiger is well known in India to suffer from the heat. Rudyard Kipling's tales of Shere Khan, the great tiger in the Mowgli stories will be remembered in this connexion. Indian heat does not demand thickness of fur. Siberian cold does, and in no way is this more conspicuous than in the ruff which, in the tiger, answers somewhat to the mane in the lion. In the Indian tiger this is thin and scanty compared with the same useful ornament in the northern breeds. The same remark, however, applies more or less to all parts of the covering. With the inborn tradition which places the tiger only in hot lands, one often wonders how it is possible for such an animal to withstand the Arctic cold of the Siberian and Manchurian borders. Travel through some of those districts has, however, convinced me that in the more favourable parts the cover is ample. The hills are well wooded, and there is abundance of thick undergrowth in which any native beast, as the tiger is, should be able to make himself comfortable, provided

only there is always the necessary warm inside lining. Caves probably abound. Food in plenty is a necessity, and that again seems to be forthcoming, for the fauna of Manchuria, and South Siberia, the two being practically the same, contains deer, stag, antelope, and wild-boar in great abundance, to say nothing of many smaller animals. There is, therefore, a richly varied *menu* supplied by Nature herself, and, of course, there are, in the more settled districts, numbers of domestic animals with which to vary the diet. In Central Asia, the tiger is known to live largely on wild swine, and wild asses.

The tiger does not leap on its prey as is represented in many books of popular natural—or rather unnatural—history. As with a galloping horse, it is a rare thing for the four legs to be all off the ground at once. The attack is made by a sudden rush of only a few yards. If the prey be an ox or deer it is seized by the throat from below. Whilst the teeth are thus engaged, the fore paws take hold one on each side of the fore quarters. Then a quick wrench, sometimes aided by a spring to one side, breaks the neck, and the operation of killing is over. Sometime a blow stuns the quarry at once. This, probably, is the usual result when man is taken. At other times, it is said, animals are hamstrung by a quick stroke of the claws from behind, after which killing is easy. The hind quarters are eaten as the first portion of the feast, and the amount which a well-grown, hungry tiger can dispose of is said to be enormous. A man a meal is about the regular requirement of those degenerate beasts that have taken to the "forbidden fruit." A cow every five days or so seems to be demanded by such as prey on the domestic cattle of the Indian villager. But the tiger is by no means dainty over his food. Having well gorged himself after a kill, he will lie up for perhaps forty-eight hours, and during that time an Indian sun does much in heightening the flavour of beef or venison. Apparently this does not deter the tiger from eating it. Carrion as it is, he devours what is left, and is even said to take steps to prevent its falling into the claws of prowling hyænas or jackals. Unless taken unawares, as they always are if "Stripes" can manage it, full-grown buffaloes and even full-grown boars are said to be quite a match for the master of the jungle, and on one occasion Bagheera, the black panther friend of Mowgli, muttered something about giving Shere Khan, the big tiger, a lesson if he did not mind his manners. But that is a Kipling story.

Endless are the tales of hairbreadth escapes and hair-raising situations in tiger hunting in India. One would like to dwell on them for a while, but space forbids. I noticed the large proportion of cases in which tigers that

have been brought to bay or to bag in China have been found sheltered in caves and amongst rocks. I know that to some extent this is true of India, and that it comes doubtless from the ordinary cat's love of dryness and warmth. But it also suggests one explanation of the presence and of the comfort of tigers in Arctic climates. They are apparently almost always found amongst the hills, and there probably they find not only the food they require but also the shelter they like. Limestone hills, plentiful in many parts of China, are often honeycombed with caves, and these unquestionably provide quarters entirely sheltered from rain, snow, or wind. A good thick fur under such circumstances would be all that the tiger would require for warmth.

Such points as these might be cleared up once for all if the hunting expeditions which I have suggested could be brought about. It is time this was done. There is hardly a country in the world where there is so much pioneering work of the kind to be achieved as in China. Central Africa is now a familiar land in comparison. North America is known from end to end. Much of South America is likewise familiar. Europe contains no secrets, and Australia no big game to speak of. China, Manchuria, and South Siberia alone are left. Who is going to undertake the task?

Chapter LI.

LEOPARDS AND LYNXES.

Quite as widespread in China as the tiger, perhaps more so, is the leopard *(Felis pardus)*. Authors sometimes write of this animal under the name of panther, but the best authorities are convinced that the dual title is to be explained from the fact that leopards vary greatly, especially in size, and not because there is any great physiological difference. We shall therefore, stick to the one name, leopard, in such notes as it may be desirable to write under this head. All that was said respecting the lack of definite information about the tiger in China applies to the leopard. There are references to be collected here and there from amongst books of travel, etc; but no detailed or scientific account such as we have in the writings of Swinhoe and David concerning birds. Major Davies, in his entertaining and valuable work on Yunnan and its borders, mentions seeing leopards—panthers, he calls them—on various occasions, one of which had been caught on the hills and was kept in a cage at a yamen. Richard's "Geography" especially mentions leopards in Anhwei, Kwangsi, Yunnan, and Manchuria, whilst I find references to it in Mr. Wade's "With Boat and Gun" from Ningpo, Wuhu, Kiukiang, etc. As a matter of fact, the leopard is the most widespread of all the wild members of the cat family with the exception of the lynx. It stretches right away from Southern Africa, to Northern Asia, Tibet excepted, where the ounce or snow leopard maintains the dignity of the race. It is, therefore, like its bigger relative, acclimatized in many realms and accustomed to the widest extremes of heat and cold. Like the tiger, also, its favourite habitat is amongst hilly country with plenty of cover and abundant shelter under rocks or in caves. There its protective colouring serves it perfectly, the ground tints being those of the rock or soil on which it lies, and the spots corresponding exactly to patches of shadow from the over-head growth. An English sportsman tells how he was just on the point of sliding down a rock to land on a convenient boulder when the said boulder sprang into life with a snarl and was off before the hunter realized how woefully his eyes had betrayed him.

In size the leopard has been found to attain a length of 8 ft. 4 in. That is believed to be the largest on record, and was shot in the Cooch Behar territory. Another mentioned in Cassell's "Natural History" was 7 ft. 6 in. and stood 2 ft. 7 in. at the shoulder. Notwithstanding its size and weight, which reaches 150 lb., the leopard climbs like a cat, running up straight boles covered with smooth bark without the slightest difficulty. This gives him an immense natural advantage over the tiger, which never climbs except perhaps along a sloping trunk, or by leaping into a low-lying fork. With such strength as the leopard must have to enable it to climb so easily, it is easy to believe in the many tales of its marvellous agility. This makes the animal all the more dangerous, especially when he takes to finding his living in the neighbourhood of man, for though he rarely turns man-eater, he is terribly destructive to domestic animals, especially to dogs, which seem to offer an irresistible temptation. Travellers both in Asia and Africa have many tales to tell of the audacity of the leopard when stalking his favourite prey. He has been known to snatch pet dogs from before the very eyes of their masters and mistresses at hill-stations in India. He has been lured into a trap baited with a dog when the trap was within a few feet of the hunter's tent. Besides this, he is of quicker temper than the tiger, more easily roused to anger, and more daring when roused. Notwithstanding his cunning in other respects, however, he is easily trapped, and in all probability the skins which we frequently see in Shanghai are thus obtained.

Like the tiger, the leopard first seizes the throat of the animal it takes, holding on there with its teeth whilst its claws sink deep into the shoulders or the base of the neck. Its object is precisely the same as in that of the tiger, the snapping of the vertebrae of the neck. Failing this, the hold is kept till with loss of blood life ebbs away. Feasting on the carcase is not begun at the hind quarters as in the case of the tiger, but with the internal organs, to get at which the abdomen is ripped up. The leopard can swim well if put to it, but he has not that liking for water that is characteristic of the tiger, and may hence be found in very arid districts at times.

The snow leopard *(Felis uncia)*, also known as the ounce, is, so far as I know, found in the Chinese Empire only on the Himalayan border of Tibet. It is possible, however, that when the exploring parties which we hope for have gone on their journeys of discovery, this beautiful animal may be found on other ranges farther north. He runs, when adult, from 6 ft. to 7 ft. 4 in. in length, and such is his beauty and rarity that Indian sportsmen have given him the place amongst the greater *felidae* which British sports-

men have given to the woodcock amongst their feathered game, that is to say, there is attached to the killing of a snow leopard more kudos than the bagging of far bigger game. Naturally much of the value of an ounce's skin depends almost entirely on the conditions under which the bearer lives. His home is high up amongst the snows. Consequently his coat is "almost of a woolly nature, the ground-colour of the upper parts being a pale whitish grey occasionally with a faint yellow tinge passing into pure white beneath. The black spots are much larger than those of the leopard, and over the greater part of the skin form irregular rosettes, with the central area of each generally darker than the ground colour of the fur. During the winter the snow leopard is said to descend the slopes to a height as low as 6,000 feet.

Felis nebulosa, or the clouded leopard, is another species even less satisfactorily known than the snow leopard. I am not absolutely certain that it is an inhabitant of China Proper, though it is known along the line of the Himalayas through Bhutan, Sikkim, Assam, Burma, the Malay Peninsula and so to the islands of the Indian Archipelago. A somewhat different variety with a shorter tail is found in Formosa. But in all probability the south-western corner of China, in the hill districts of Yunnan and along the border line between that province and Burma would, if searched, be found to contain specimens. The largest measurement connected with the clouded leopard gives 6 ft. 6 in. as the length, but that seems to have been a very exceptional animal, and 5 ft. 6 in to 6 ft. is probably more near the average size. To the Malays the animal is the "tree-tiger." Practically all its life is said to be passed on trees, on the branches of which it sleeps. We are, however, dependent for most of our information on native hunters, and these are not always reliable.

The hunting leopard, or cheetah, differs considerably from the true leopards, so much so that he is put into another category under the name *Cynœlurus jubatus*. His claws are only partially retractile, showing him to be no true cat. His teeth, too, show variation. Everybody who has seen pictures of the cheetah, which name, by the way, simply means "spotted," cannot fail to have noted how thoroughly Nature has endowed him with power for the chase, for though the cheetah naturally likes to get as close to his prey as possible, he is not, like the tiger and leopard, dependent for his dinner on the success of his first rush, but can, and does, run down prey as speedy as the black buck of the Indian plains, against whom, when he has been trained, he is frequently pitted by his British or Indian master. I am claiming him as a member of the Chinese family on the strength of the fact that he is well known to have been used for hunting by the Tartars

ages ago. Whether or no he is to be found within the limits of the Empire in his wild state I cannot say. He is known in Persia, however, and the chances are that diligent search through the westernmost portions of the Celestial Empire would find him there. He attains a length of seven feet and stands from thirty to thirty-three inches in height, and even in India is far better known in the tame than in the wild state. When out hunting, his eyes are hooded after the manner pursued in falconry until the quarry is sighted. Well treated, the cheetah is said to develop many cat-like qualities, purring with pleasure and rubbing itself against the legs of its friends in quite a tabby-like style. Its speed is very great, so great that when at its best, "the speed of a race-horse is for the moment much inferior." Leopard-like, it seizes its prey by the throat and holds on there, keeping, in the case of buck, one paw over the horns to prevent hurt to itself.

Felis lynx, usually known as the lynx, and formerly far more numerous in Europe than it is at present, stretches through Russia into Siberia, and in one form or other is found in Persia and Tibet. The true lynxes are, I believe, all northern animals. They vary in colour from pale sandy grey, to a rufous-fawn or ferruginous red, the under parts being white. About 3 ft. 6 in. is the length of a large full-sized lynx, but a specimen has been known to reach 4 ft. $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. Forest dwellers, expert climbers, and more or less of a retiring nature, lynx may eventually be found in parts of the Chinese Empire where, so far, it is not known. In Tibet where the variety known is *Felis Isabellina*, its habits conform to the nature of the country, and trees being scarce, it makes its home amongst rocks and barren sandy wastes. On the mountains it ranges in height from 5,000 ft. in winter, to some 15,000 ft. in summer. Goats, sheep, smaller mammals, and birds form its food.

The lynx is a peculiar looking animal owing to the long tufts of hair and the whiskered ruff dependent from the side of its head and jaws. The soles of the feet, too, are covered with hair. Its danger to man lies in its wasteful destructiveness, for it will frequently kill far more than it needs to eat. One pair is reported to have destroyed half a dozen sheep in a single night. Their agility is remarkable. In contradistinction to that of most other members of the cat family, the tail of the lynx is short. The animal is however, all the more interesting from the fact that comparatively little is known of it.

Chapter LII.

WILD CATS.

In the good old days of China sport, that is to say during the years immediately succeeding the desolating passage of the rebels of Great Peace—the Tai-pings—across the country, and the hardly less destructive visits of their foes, the Imperialists, when large tracts even in thickly peopled Kiangsu had gone back to jungle, and wild life had become as common as human life had been, there was rarely an extended shooting trip which did not include in its bag one or more wild cats. (*Vide* "With Boat and Gun," pp. 234-6) *Felis Sinensis*, the common wild cat of China, varies considerably both in colour and size. Specimens have been secured but little larger than a large domestic cat, whilst others attain to the proportions of a small leopard almost. There is a very weasel-like look about some of them. The silky rotundity of the pet of the hearth yields to a "tucked up" wiry-looking, leggy appearance well adapted to many aspects of tree life, or, if colour is concerned as well as shape, to an easy and undetected passage through dry undergrowth. Doubtless the wild cat of China uses its natural advantages in both these ways. He is alert enough to spring on a rising pheasant, he sometimes has weight enough to secure a fawn, possibly even, with assistance, the smaller adult local deer, *Hydropotes inermis*. Mr. Wade says of the wild cats in the immediate neighbourhood, "There is only one true wild-cat with us (*Felis Bengalensis*), in size equal to a large domestic cat but very slim in the body." What has been said above relates to the specimens shown in the Shanghai Museum under the name given. *Felis Bengalensis* varies in length from 2 ft. to 2 ft. 2 in. the length of tail being about equal to that of body. Its ground colour varies according to climate, soil, etc. from a reddish tint to grey, and again from grey to tawny, with spots, also varying considerably in depth of colour from tawny through brown to a chocolate almost black. This cat is known probably all over the central and southern parts of China, possibly also farther north. It is familiar to western naturalists as the " Leopard-cat " rather from its spots than from its size.

But it is not by any means the only cat of the Empire. A more beautiful one, known along the southern frontier and in Burma, is the marbled cat, *Felis marmorata*, of about the same size as *Felis Bengalensis*, but, as its name implies, more richly marked. Nature has her reason for this. The marbled cat is almost purely arboreal, and its markings serve for the purpose of making it seem part and parcel of the branch on which it lies in wait, just as the markings of the night-jar give it during the day the appearance of a knotty excrescence from the bark.

There is also the Tibetan cat, *Felis scripta*, which in colouring is somewhat like the ounce or snow leopard, but in size is a true cat.

Still another, known along the line of the Himalayas and in Tibet, is the so-called golden cat, *F. Temmincki*. This is of larger stature, rivalling very nearly the clouded leopard at times, that is to say measuring 5 ft. or more in length. From the S. E. end of the mountain system, it passes on into Burma, and is probably a denizen of the hilly districts in S. W. Yunnan near to which there has recently been frontier trouble between Great Britain and China. Scarcely anything is known of this cat even by the most experienced naturalists, another reason for that widespread examination into the life of Chinese mammalia which has been before recommended.

Many of our readers will remember that very beautiful, if somewhat fantastic, ode by Gray on the death of a favourite cat by drowning, of which the moral is,

"A favourite has no friends."

Everybody, too, knows the fondness of our domestic cat for fish, and some instances have been reported where tabby has seriously taken to fishing notwithstanding her dislike to wetting her fur. But very few people know that there is a wild cat which is so devoted to this practice as to be known by the name of the fishing cat. Yet so it is. Technically the species is named *F. viverrina*. It resembles other cats both with regard to size and shape, being spotted, short-limbed, and brownish-grey in colour as a rule. It is, however, considerably larger than the domestic animal, reaching at times a length of 3½ft. and standing some 15 inches high. Its peculiar mode of life is not its only distinguishing mark. Anatomically there are differences in the skull which mark it off from ordinary cats, and bring it more nearly into line with monkeys. Geographically it ranges from Ceylon through India to the Malay Peninsula, Burma, and so into southern China. Possibly it is the same species that is found in Formosa. Terrible is the character—for a cat—of *F. viverrina*. That it should take to fowls when in the

neighbourhood of human habitations is not to be wondered at, nor that it should make off now and then with a lamb or some other toothsome and not too heavy domestic quarry, but that it should, even when acting together in a pair, drag off a brace of ewes in a single night is a matter of some surprise. Yet such a fact is recorded in "The Royal Natural History," edited by one of our best naturalists, Richard Lydekker. A still more surprising story tells how one of these animals broke through a thin partition behind which a tame female leopard was confined, and notwithstanding the disparity in size, the leopard being twice as big, the result of the fight which followed was that the cat killed its opponent. Ordinarily, however, the fishing cat lives on the products of swamps and marshes, taking fish, molluscs, small mammals, birds, and even reptiles. Anything that comes along serves as "grist to the mill."

Two other species of cats found in the Tibetan and Turkestan portions of the Chinese Empire are allied to the desert cat of India. They are known as *F. Shawiana*, and *F. torquata*. The former belongs to the districts of Yarkand and Kashgar, the latter to the Tibetan border of Nipal. It is believed that some of these are the descendants of tame cats run wild, the domestic tabbies of the neighbourhood frequently breeding with some of the wild ones. Some authorities on the other hand think it possible that here we have the particular wild species which originally gave us the first domestic breed. Geographically there is a good deal to be said for this theory.

Throughout southern Siberia and Mongolia, probably also in Manchuria and some parts of northern China there may be found *F. manul*, usually described as Pallas's cat. Its northern habitat would suggest differences between it and those of the south. Those differences are found. The fur suits the climate. It is soft, thick, and very long. The tail, too, is very bushy. The colours probably vary somewhat with the season, running from a buff-yellow with darker marking on the back to silvery grey. The tail is ringed, and there are stripes along the loins. In size Pallas's cat is practically that of the domestic kind, and it is supposed to be the original progenitor of all the Angora and Persian cats now tamed. In a large portion of Asia it takes the place of the common wild cat of Europe.

That species, *F. catus*, is the last on our list. A specimen of the wild cat, as found in Scotland, was once killed measuring 45 inches in length. It was common in olden times throughout the whole of Great Britain, but is now found only in the wilder parts of Scotland. Thomas Edward has no record of having met with one in any

of his nocturnal wanderings. But it is still well known in some of the wilder portions of the European continent, and has been traced eastward to the Caspian and to Persia. It is said to be unknown in either Norway, Sweden, or Russia, and it remains to be proved whether in Siberia and Mongolia, etc. it shares territory with *F.manul*. It has the power of interbreeding with domestic varieties, and in times gone by crosses half wild were not very uncommon in the wilder parts of Great Britain, especially in Scotland. There is however, a good deal of difference between the ordinary tame cat and the wild one, and this is specially marked in the tail. That of the domestic animal is somewhat longer and more pointed. That of the other stumpier, more distinctly barred, and looking like that of the Manx cat, as if it had been cut off. Naturally, too, the colour of the wild variety does not vary to the extent so frequently found with those domesticated. I had a kitten a month or two ago which was very similar in marking to that of the wild cat in China, *F. Sinensis*, as they call it at the museum. It disappeared, unfortunately, the body perhaps in pie, the pelt to the skin-dealer. The striped markings of the wild cat are so well developed that in olden days the animal was sometimes known as the British tiger. The nine lives of the tame cat are extended to at least a dozen in the case of *Felis catus*. No other animal is so tenacious of life.

A VERY MIXED MENAGERIE.

China is well supplied with other carnivorous animals besides those of the cat tribe. The civets are common round about Shanghai as also in other districts. *Viverra Zibetha*, the large civet-cat, is, however, better known in the south. It reaches a length of over four feet, is yellowish or hoary grey with black stripes and spots, varying considerably in appearance according to its environment. In common with all its family it is destructive to game, poultry, rabbits, hares, etc. It is from this species that the drug called civet is derived. It is a secretion of the sub-caudal gland, and is so attractive to hunting dogs that they are said to leave any other scent for it.

The smaller civet-cat, *V. Malaccensis*, is well known in this neighbourhood. There is a specimen in the Shanghai Museum, presented by Dr. Stanley, which came from the Pootung side. In 1893, Mr. D. M. Henderson after a long chase managed to shoot a male specimen in his garden on the Bubbling Well Road. It weighed 4½ lb. only, but it had recently killed a hare the remains of which were found amongst the bushes. Last year a specimen was seen on the Bubbling Well Road in broad daylight. It made its way into the wooded waste land on the north of the bend near Chang Su Ho's Garden, having probably been chased in the country and driven into the streets. Mr. Wade tells in one place of having seen women busily engaged in skinning these odoriferous animals in villages on the south bank of the Yangtze, together with raccoon dogs. The little civet runs to about two feet in length. It is sometimes caught and tamed in India. Apparently, there are either two varieties or else a great difference in size in the one, for though the "little civet" has, as above mentioned, an average of about two feet, *V. Malaccensis* is said by some authorities to attain a length of 40 inches.

The tiger-civet *(Linsang pardicolor)* is, I think, confined, so far as China is concerned, to the southern provinces. It has a total length of some 30 in., is extremely beautiful, with the manners and climbing power of a cat. Some of the palm-civets also find their way into Yunnan and the south.

One occasionally hears of the mungoose in this part of China, but, so far as my own experience and reading go, the only mungoose native of China is the crab mungoose. *Herpestes urva*. This is found in South China, where it seems to be partly aquatic in its habits, living largely on molluscs, frogs, etc. It is the proud possessor of two scent glands which have the skunk-like power of forcible emission. *Herpestes urva*, therefore, is not a species to go into rhapsodies over.

I have already mentioned the raccoon-dog, so called from a fancied resemblance to the raccoon. This animal, known scientifically as *Canis procyonoides*, is common throughout China, Japan, and Manchuria, and stretches even into southern Siberia. Brownish-yellow and black are its usual tints, though its colouration varies considerably. The face, however, always has a combination of black, white, and grey. The muzzle is sharp, the ears short and rounded, the tail bushy and not very long. In winter it is well protected by a coat of fur at once long and thick. Its habits are usually nocturnal, and in some parts it is said to hibernate. It is a true dog, but is said to be a welcome adjunct to a Japanese bill-of-fare, whilst its fur is highly esteemed.

Foxes are numerous in most parts of China. So are wolves in the wilder and more hilly districts. These are well known along the Yangtze, and stories are told at times of their carrying off little children. In the northern provinces, in Manchuria, Mongolia, and especially in Shensi, wolves are as familiar in the folklore as they are in Russia. Terrible devastation has been wrought by them at times. One of the ten great depredations of which the Shensi people have records was that of an invasion of wolves. They are said to have been "beasts of brazen heart and iron courage". They killed men, women, and children by the hundred thousand. They had "hemp-stalk legs", they ran like lightning. They set their teeth, raised their bristles, sprang at their prey and, in a moment, all was over. They did not eat of the flesh but merely drank the blood. Such is the story told by an old native writer. Other irruptions, into the same territory, of deer and sand-grouse are known in Chinese annals. From the direction in which they came, the sand-grouse were locally known as "Turk's birds." In all but size many of the domesticated dogs of China have a true wolfish aspect, whilst others are similar to the dogs of the Esquimaux, and some others of like kind, which have evidently been allowed to breed in the natural manner, and so have not had their peculiarities perpetuated in distinct breeds as is the case in the West. The Chinese, indeed, either have lost, or never acquired, that instinct for improvement in breeds of domestic animals which is so strongly developed in England.

The Tibetan wolf is sometimes known as the golden wolf, or red wolf, *Canis chanco*. It is somewhat larger than the European. I am not sure whether the jackal, so well known over a large part of Asia, forms part of the Chinese fauna.

Badgers are well known, especially in the soft alluvial soil of this province, into which they can burrow as fast as men can dig. Being nocturnal in their habits, however, they are seldom seen unless one goes out for the

purpose with terriers, spades, and all the paraphernalia of the chase. The only one which I ever surprised in the open was a belated young one just after dawn, close to where the Shanghai Railway Station now stands. I was on the look out for spring snipe: young "Brock" was doubtless sauntering home after a "night of it." But there have been many badger hunts with and without dogs in the district round Shanghai. The grave mounds are the favourite hunts of badgers. There they can form a "sett" at once dry and comfortable. So "Uncle Brock" takes up his abode where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," and from this hallowed ground is ruthlessly drawn at times by the young men of Shanghai. A bright moonlight night is the time for hunting him if he is to be got in the open. Then some good cross-bred bull-terriers form perhaps the ideal pack. They are speedy enough easily to outstrip their quarry before he can reach the sanctuary of his "sett," and strong enough to hold him up when headed. Then he can be either dispatched or "sacked" at will. Digging him out is at once a labour and an art. It is necessary first of all to know in which of the many ramifications of his tunnelled home he has taken refuge. So a terrier has to be sent in to find him and keep him engaged if possible, whereupon his line of retreat may if necessary be cut off by a cross trench into which he may, perhaps, thrust himself by digging, doubtless to his unmeasured surprise. The record weight of a badger is given as 37 lb. There are various species.

Hares are other animals that are well dispersed throughout the Chinese Empire. There are at least seven species of Asiatic hares, but so little is as yet known respecting the various Chinese species that it is impossible to say how many are to be found within the many climes to which China can lay claim. *Lepus Sinensis*, as known in this neighbourhood, is more of a rabbit than a hare in size. It is, however, a true hare, the rabbit, so far as I am aware being unknown in the province. It is plentiful enough when the conditions are suitable. I have had some very good hare shooting at Christmas time in fields of standing straw from which the grain had been taken. Natives say that the local hare burrows, and they point to "buries" in grave mounds as proof, but it has never been my good fortune to see one put out of such cover.

Born slayers of the hare are the weasel tribe, very numerously represented everywhere, as may be seen any day by a visit to a pelt-monger's smelly establishment. I have frequently seen weasels within the limits of the Shanghai settlement, and those residents who pride themselves on their fowls have to provide carefully against nocturnal visits.

I shot a weasel once which, lacking chicken or hare, had contented himself with a fine fat frog, and was in the act of making a meal of it.

Allied to the weasels are otters, also well represented. Many years ago now, there was a family of otters which had made its home at the Public Garden corner of the old Garden Bridge. There, one might, with a stroke of good fortune, come across either *pater* or *mater familias*. Once I say one of them cross the footpath into the Public Garden, notwithstanding the fact that there were a considerable number of people in the garden at the time and still more crossing and recrossing the bridge close by. On another occasion I had the very uncommon pleasure of watching the mother and two or three little ones playing about in the water close to the steps which formerly led down the slope there. It is possible that these animals had once been tame, as it is not at all an uncommon thing for the Chinese to tame otters and train them to catch fish. They are said to be extremely interesting pets. *Lutra sinensis*, the Chinese variety, runs to nearly four feet over all, though the average length is less. It still finds a home in many of the creeks in the Yangtze delta. Sea-otters are, I believe, found along the China coast. There are plenty of them along the more northern Pacific coasts.

The seal is another amphibious animal which frequents Pacific waters and visits the China coasts, and I have twice seen whale at sea between Hongkong and Japan. These were probably the grey whale *(Rachianectes glaucus)* the only one of its kind. It is found in the North Pacific and nowhere else, except perhaps during migrations. The lesser sperm whale is another Far Eastern species. Of porpoises the name is legion. They come up the rivers at all times, and may be seen in the Huangpu above and below Shanghai, as they may up the Yangtze. The "killer" or grampus is another Pacific cetacean. So is the "black-fish", another genus. A representative of the dolphins, specially known on the China coast, is the White Dolphin, *Sotalia Sinensis*. This peculiar creature is said to have a ground colour of white, pink fins, and black eyes. It is known bon in the Min and Pearl Rivers, as also in the harbour of Amoy.

Chapter LIV.

SOME BIG GAME.

Bears of various kinds are well known to the Chinese. The Himalayan black bear (*Ursus Tibetanus*) is, as its name implies, a highlander. But even in Tibet it is not common, and has to be sought on mountain slopes from a height of from 5,000 ft. to 11,000 ft. according to the season. In common with others of their family they are more given to vegetable than to animal food, though very fond of honey. This particular species is somewhat handicapped by bad eyesight, but what it lacks in this regard it makes up in keenness of scent.

The brown bear (*U. Arctus*) finds a home from the Himalayas to Siberia the species varying somewhat from each other according to climate and surroundings. The extreme length of the Himalayan species known so far is given as 7 ft. 6 in. this being some six inches shorter than the record specimen in Europe. In Siberia, on the other hand, specimens have been found exceeding 8 ft. My own experience with them consists, unfortunately, only in an acquaintance with one very remarkable museum specimen. We had stopped one day at a little roadside station on the Siberian route, where, beside the station buildings, was a small collection of stuffed animals from the surrounding country—the eastern foot-hills belonging to the Ural range. The only animals I can remember were a very fine wolf in splendid condition, and a still finer brown bear which looked a monstrous size. What its height really was—it was posed standing on its hind legs—I cannot say, but I am quite prepared to believe in the statement that specimens are found over 8 ft. in length and weighing as much as 1,500 lb.

Turning from the fiercer animals to those of gentler type we come to the Chinese representatives of the wild sheep family. There are several of these, some of which are much sought after by sportsmen. The Pamir Wild Sheep (*Ovis poli*), for instance, which has been long connected with name with Marco Polo, is famed for the magnificent horns sometimes grown by the ram. An extreme horn length of 6 ft. 3 in. has been known, the girth of this specimen being 1 ft. 4 in. and the spread at the tips no less than 4 ft. 6½ in.

O. Ammon, the Siberian Argali, is another fine sheep believed to be found within the northern confines of the Chinese Empire. It weighs sometimes as much as 350 lb. and has a record horn measurement of over 5ft. The Tibetan Argali (*O. Hodgsoni*) is very similar to the Siberian.

Littledale's sheep is to be met with on the slopes of the Central Asian regions amongst the Tien Shan and Altai ranges. Its measurements are much the same as those of the Argali.

Another wild sheep identical perhaps with the Indian Oorial is found in the western districts of Chinese Turkestan, where it is known as the Sha or Sha-po. Its horns are as gracefully curved as those of the other species, but they are not of the same length, and the animal is, as a rule, smaller.

The Kamtschatkan wild sheep (*O. nivicola*) may possibly be found in N. Manchuria along the range of the Long White Mountain, but I am not sure about this.

Of goats, *Capra Sibirica*, the Asiatic Ibex, is known on the Tien Shan, and there are other species found on the Himalayas both on the Indian and the Tibetan side. The celebrated Markhor is one of these. This beautiful, agile, and graceful creature is noticeable for the spiral twist to its horns. The longest known of these measured 45 inches. One species of the Ibex has spread itself practically from Siberia to the Himalayas.

A small species of goat, allied to the chamois, is the serow, of which specimens have been found in Formosa, by Swinhoe and others.

Of antelopes, China can boast of the Tibetan gazelle, known as the Goa (*Gazella picticaudata*), a little animal of about 2 ft. in height; the Mongolian gazelle, (*G. gutturosa*), Prjewalski's gazelle, the Chiru, or Tibetan antelope, and some others.

The wild yak is found in Tibet alone, and there only high up amongst the massive piles of the great Asian backbone.

Various forms of deer have distributed themselves over the Empire. The Kashmir stag, and its Sikkim cousin, the Shou, may probably be claimed as occasional migrants into the neighbouring Chinese Territory. There is a wapiti found on the Tien Shan with horn measurements of 55 inches, and another, the Bactrian wapiti, in various parts of Turkestan, with less imposing antlers. A third is the Manchurian wapiti, with still smaller antler measurements, and the last of the genus known so far, the Siberian wapiti, about which there are no very authentic data to be found as yet.

A pretty little type of deer is the sika type known both in China and Japan. The antlers are less branched than is

the case with many other kinds, no more than nine points having been found as a rule. The Japanese sika weighs about 180 lb. It has a Manchurian relative which is somewhat taller, and another, known as the Peking Sika *(Cervus hortulorum)*, which stands about 4 ft. Of this species a ten-pointer has been killed. In Formosa many years ago, Swinhoe was the discoverer of the Formosan sambar, *(C. unicolor Swinhoei)* of which a specimen in the British Museum gives the following measurements—Length of horn, 1 ft. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in: tip to tip, 9 in., points, 3 and 3. A bigger sambar than this is, however, found in Szechwan, but it is little known in Europe. There are other species of deer found in the south, the little muntjac or barking deer, for example; but the most interesting to Shanghai residents because the only one found in the immediate neighbourhood, is the improperly so-called hog-deer, (*Hydropotes inermis*,) for the original description of which we are, I believe, again indebted to Swinhoe. For complete accounts of this interesting animal, the reader is referred once more to "With Boat and Gun." Mr. Wade says, "A fair average weight for a river deer is 22 lb.", and European sportsmen will probably be astonished when they are told that "No. 8 shot is quite large enough to knock over a deer at 25 yards." I have shot them with No. 5 myself. As its name implies, the "water-drinking" deer is "unarmed," that is hornless, but he is provided with a pair of dependent tusks in the upper jaw which measure three or four inches and are sometimes very sharp. I have turned this little deer out of all sorts of places, but have never been able to study it, myself unseen. Once I saw a little herd of five or six on the "Kashing plain" whilst it was yet in the wild state in which the Taiping rebellion left it, and was much interested in watching their antics. They were well out of danger when they saw me, but they moved off, flinging their heels high in the air after the manner of a frisky colt. From 2,000 to 3,000 per annum, Mr. Wade tells us, find their way to the Shanghai market.

From the graceful deer to the clumsy pig is a far cry. But in China the pig is, as in Europe, fair game for the gun, and not, as in India, specially reserved for "sticking." How much difference there is between *Sus scrofa* the European wild boar, and *Sus cristatus*, his Indian brother, is a matter of dispute between modern naturalists, but Mr. Lydekker thinks them specifically distinct. Our Chinese representative, which rejoices in the name of *Sus leucomystax*, the white-whiskered boar, may also be a separate species. But the whole matter demands scientific research. In place of that in this con-

nexion, however, I prefer to condense a graphic account of a pig-shooting incident in the career of a well known Shanghai resident in the 'seventies and 'eighties, Mr. W.S. Percival, of H.M. Civil Service. His book, which contains the story, was published in 1889 under the title of "The Land of the Dragon." It was on one of the hills near Chinkiang he says "that I bagged the largest pig I ever saw." "It was a near thing, for he nearly bagged me instead." The pig had been lying up amongst the tangled scrub on the side of the hill whence it was turned out by the commotion caused by four beaters whom Mr. Percival had with him. "One of these suddenly called out, 'Yah-chue'! and a huge pig crashed through the scrub and trotted along the narrow path in front of me. I had a heavy twelve-gauge double rifle weighing close on to 12 lb. and throwing two-ounce flat-headed conical balls, propelled by six and a half drams of the best rifle powder. Some twenty yards in front of me was the monster, the largest I have ever seen: a splendid driving shot, and I knew there was quite sufficient power in the gun to rake him from stern to stem. It was too easy a shot, and I suppose I was careless over it, for a worse shot I never made. The ball struck him five inches higher than I intended, ran along the spine, tearing the skin along the back and cutting away the half of one of his ears, inflicting a mere scratch that did not in the least disable him." Naturally the boar wheeled and charged, and there was a very good chance for proceedings on the morrow in which H.M.'s Consul would act as coroner. There was no time to re-load. "As the boar passed he made a most vigorous dig with his tusks, but the instant before he made his thrust I had sprung on one side off the track into the scrub, and as he passed he just grazed me near the thigh. His impetus carried him three yards farther before he quite realized he had missed: then he came round again for another charge, but as he exposed his broadside, I planted the second ball at not more than six feet distance well behind the shoulder. He stopped instantly, favoured me with another of his wicked glances: then, slowly his head dropped, and he fell over on his side and died. We gralloched him, slung him over a bamboo, and sent him with four coolies down to Chinkiang, where we afterwards heard that he turned the scales at 510 lb. His tusks, which were in perfect condition, were six and a half inches long."

It will be seen from this account which is quite reliable, Mr. Percival being well known not only to the present writer but to hundreds of others on the China coast, that the wild boar of China, whatever his classical honours, surpasses both his Indian and European relatives considerably in weight. The extreme weight of *Sus scrofa* of Europe is but

400 lb. His tusks, however, ran round the outer curve to as much as 13 in. The Indian boar weighs something over 300 lb. but his tusks reach to nearly 14½ in. Mr. Percival says that there are stories amongst the Chinese country people of bigger boars than even his. "They are black and white in colour, are said to have teeth like saws, and to weigh from eight to nine hundred pounds each." They are reported to be very savage, doing great devastation in the rice fields, and sometimes eating children. This he took *cum grano salis*.

Chapter LV.

REPTILES.

Leaving the smaller and less well known mammalia till a more convenient season, observers of wild life in China find ample scope for their land and water studies in the many species of reptiles in which the country abounds. Here it will be possible only to glance at the more prominent and offer such comment as personal observation suggests. Books on natural history need not to be very old to be innocent of all knowledge of the Chinese alligator, the existence of which was not even suspected in Europe till within recent times. During my residence in Shanghai there have been three occasions, if I remember rightly, when alligators have been found in the river or on its banks. The biggest measured but 8 ft. In one instance some six or eight were said to have been brought here by a Siamese barque, the captain of of which thought to dispose of them to the Chinese. Failing in this he turned them adrift in the river. It was during the hot weather, and some timid swimmers gave up their evening plunge in consequence. The rest of us kept on and, so far as I know, nobody ever came to close quarters with any of the saurians except ashore. One was caught in the Old Dock, and another, which had so far forgotten himself as to be found in the very early morning in Broadway, was also taken. The species seems to be entirely of the fish-eating kind.

With regard to snakes, the Chinese not merely assert, but firmly stick to the assertion, that there are certain kinds of snakes with feet, a survival here of a similar old belief in Europe that, before the little episode in the Garden, before "Man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into the world and all our woe," the serpent stood upright. I used to combat the feet idea as quite nonsensical. But many years ago as the result of a little incident at the Hills, I ceased to wonder and contradict. I was in search of rare ferns one day on the hillside, when I saw moving swiftly through the undergrowth what I took to be a new snake. It was only about 18 inches long, with a body thickness of about the size of one's little finger. I killed and examined it. Sure enough there were

four legs, very short, but still unmistakeable. It was, of course, a lizard—of what species I cannot say. But I never ridiculed the Chinese belief in legged snakes after that. There are several other sorts of lizards which I have come across in my wanderings, but I have only seen one more specimen of the kind just named, and that was under a foot in length.

Snakes are plentiful and of several kinds. I do not mean to enter on a scientific disquisition on them, but only wish to relate the results of my own knowledge. The commonest is the so-called grass snake, very much like its representative in England, but attaining greater length. The biggest I have killed for examination purposes measured seven feet. It is perfectly harmless, and may be found almost everywhere from the paddy field to the hilltop. It swims with consummate ease and grace. Another variety, or rather, I think, two or three other varieties, confine themselves as a rule to the creeks and their banks. These are quite small, and so far as my own observation goes rarely attain the length of more than three feet. These also are quite harmless. I have examined many. The only snake which I have actually seen with fangs here was a sort of viper which I saw immediately after a farmer had killed it in his field close to the then suburbs of Shanghai. The site is now covered with houses. Of this the length was about 30 inches. There were the usual viperine signs, the flattened, broad-backed head, the comparatively thick body, and the stumpy tail, with none of the attractiveness which makes the grass snake a thing of beauty. The markings were dark in colour, and there was generally that fat repulsive appearance which some of the poisonous snakes possess in such a marked degree. I cut off the head and carried it home. The fangs were well formed and about a third of an inch long. During the year 1900, whilst Shanghai had, amongst the garrison sent here on account of the Boxers, some Indian troops, there was some very interesting correspondence respecting snakes found within half a mile or so of one of the camps. Col. Rundall had no hesitation at all in declaring them to be Russell's viper, one of the most venomous serpents known. He ridiculed the notion that the troops had brought them from India in fodder. They had seen three of the little beasts, one three-quarters of a mile from the camp. Another correspondent wrote to say that the snake in question was marked very much like the Russell, and was venomous, but that it was not the Russell but the *Halys Blomhoffi*, uncommon near Shanghai though well known farther north. Personally, I have never seen one alive. I have seen specimens of another snake known to the Chinese

as the Hu-cha-lien, or fire-coloured chain snake, the markings of which have a reddish tinge. This is said to be poisonous, but I can neither confirm nor deny the native belief. Only once have I come across a specimen of the curious snake known as the "Iron-wire snake," one of the burrowing family. The Chinese have a belief about these that if they coil themselves round a man's finger or the tails of animals it is impossible to remove them, that strangulation of the member results, and sloughing takes place till it drops off. "The China Medical Missionary Journal", Vol. XV. p. 303 gives the following description: "The snake is about 6 inches long, shaped much like a common earth worm, has about the same diameter, a trifle smaller perhaps, and darker in colour." This answers precisely to the specimen I saw. That described was seen in Foochow, mine in Chekiang, on the hills at Chapoo. When first I saw it, my ten year old son was nonchalantly turning it over with his naked toe! I did not know at the time that all these burrowing snakes are harmless. The Chinese do not resent the presence of snakes in their houses sometimes, probably because of their rat-killing powers. I spent a month once in a Chinese house amongst the hills of Northern Chekiang, and was assured that there was a snake living within a dozen feet of my bed. I never saw it, however, and the thought of it did not worry me in the least. Pootoo Island, the outermost of the Chusan Group is noted for its snakes. Ten days which I spent there many years ago discovered many. One had slid into a small gravel pit about two or three feet deep, from which, owing to the friable sides, it could not escape. It was about a yard long, very dark in colour, with red spots which glowed like coals of fire when I teased it. When killed it turned out to be quite innocuous. I once watched through a whole day when traversing the China Sea for sea snakes, and saw a large number, especially amongst those long streaks of floating scum which sometimes for miles cover the water. They varied between three and about eight feet in length apparently—fat unctuous, repulsive creatures looking as venomous as they probably are.

Southern China, of which I have no very intimate knowledge, is said to be rich in reptilia of almost all sorts. Of the reptile life of Hongkong we have, of course, a more or less complete knowledge. There are at least seven species of snakes, one of them a python which is common but, as a rule, not of any very large size considering its kind. Occasionally, however, we hear of one large enough to cause note to be taken of it in the press. Cobras are numerous in some parts. Some years ago one was found on the verandah of Gen. Black's house on the Peak. The cats were playing

with it. Another species to be avoided is a bright-green pit viper, *Trimeresurus graminens*, which has the honour of belonging to the same family as the rattlesnakes. One was killed some years ago, as I find in my notes, which measured 3 ft. In 1894 cobras were so plentiful that the Government paid 50 cents a head for them, a custom which might serve on an emergency, but which would probably lead to breeding if continued, the Chinese being always ready to earn an honest penny. One of the very poisonous sea-snakes before referred to, a species of *Hydrophis*, is found in the waters round Hongkong. Ashore they have also species of the iron-wire snake, classically named *Typhlina*, which burrows under stones and into the soil.

Cobras come as far north as Wenchow, if not farther. I have recently heard of their being killed there in the garden of the Commissioner of Customs, Mr. Bowring. In all probability the mainland in the neighbourhood of the Canton delta is richer in reptile life than is the steep and rocky isle of Hongkong. The Shanghai Museum contains a fair number of specimens, and was the scene some few months ago of a most interesting lecture on reptiles by Dr. Stanley, the Honorary Curator. But there is a vast deal yet to be learnt of this fascinating subject, and it is a pity some of the many missionaries and consuls scattered over the surface of the country do not follow the noble example set them by Père David, Mr. Swinhoe, and a few other pioneers, and give the world the benefit of their researches.

How many species of tortoises and turtles are to be met with in the Chinese Empire I have not the slightest idea. Judging by what one sees in the delta of the Yangtze, the number of individuals is illimitable, whatever may be the number of species. One finds the tortoise everywhere, in fields, gardens, marshes, ponds, rivers, etc. and the number of carapaces that might be accummulated is without number. The native farmers use them for blinkers when their cattle are circling round the irrigating machine. One kind of sea turtle which lands on the island of Hongkong and other adjacent islands sometimes weighs as much as 400 lbs. They come ashore to lay their eggs.

Chapter LVI.

FABULOUS CREATURES.

No account of actually existing life within the limits of the Chinese Empire could be complete which did not include fabulous animals of various kinds, beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, in which the Chinese believe quite as firmly as they do in most of those referred to in preceding pages. Western readers must not, in reading what is to follow, indulge too freely their hilarity, for they may well be reminded of their own credulity in times gone by, when dragons were known at Wantley and a unicorn became an equal supporter with the lion of British arms. Reading between the lines it will be seen that in some of the following descriptions there is an admixture of fact and fable. Taking the subject under the heads of beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, we come first to the beasts.

Priority ought surely to be given to the dragon, that being the symbol of Chinese nationalism. I think it quite possible that the dragon might have been the off-spring of fright, imagination, and bad drawing after an unexpected adventure with an alligator. Later on the imaginary animal acquired the power of rising into the air, and so became a flying dragon, a symbol of power, as well as of strength and wisdom. It is classed in China as one of the "four marvellous animals," the other three being the tortoise, the phœnix, and the unicorn. Such as follow, it will be noted, rank amongst those that are not marvellous but merely natural.

There is the Che-lin, for example, known to everybody acquainted with Chinese pictorial art and pottery. It belongs to the deer family, but later ages provided it with a cow's tail, the forehead of a wolf, and the hoof of a horse. When the Che-lin and the Phœnix walked abroad in the olden times, then were the days of prosperity. Before the times of Confucius even, this animal had become the symbol of national well-being.

Next we have the Ma-hwa. This is a creature of the monkey tribe, or rather of the apes. He is found in the western parts of the Empire, particularly in Szechwan. What he is specially noted for is his penchant for pretty

women. Whenever one of these strays into his haunts, he carries her off, makes her his wife, and proceeds to lay siege to her affections in a way which argues knowledge. He loads her with jewellry and fine clothes, which he gets somehow or other by stealing, and in time the woman becomes so fond of him that she would not leave him if she could!

No less wonderful is the Jung, or gibbon, of Yangchow in the province of Kiangsu. (The exact whereabouts of several of these marvellous creatures is well known to everybody in China—except, of course those of the locality named.) The Jung is an extremely large and agile ape, a tyrant to his own species. He is described as having long yellowish-red hair, and is said to be of a cannibal turn of mind. Whenever he wants a meal the other monkeys are made to sit round him in a circle so that he may by means of pinching and poking find out which of them is the fattest. On the head of the selected he lays a stone. The rest are then free to scamper off, the victim only remaining and following its captor, who doubtless looks at it as the cook of the "Nancy Bell" looked at the sole survivor:—

"Come here," says he, with a proper pride,
Which his smiling features tell,
"'T will soothing be, if I let you see
How extremely nice you'll smell!"

For the veracious natural history of the Celestial encyclopædia tells us that the monkey follows the Jung until they reach the nearest stream, into which the monkey plunges, washes himself carefully, pulls out all his hair, and then lies down to be eaten!

The Jih-kih is of the bovine family. There must also be a connexion between it and certain pigs in the more poverty, stricken districts of Ireland, where the people are so poor that they can afford to kill only half a pig at a time. Similary with the Jih-kih, which belongs to the province of Kansu, and should be extremely useful to any Russian invaders who may come along, for this useful animal is able to provide its owner with one or two catties of meat *per diem*, which when cut away is completely replaced within twenty-four hours.

One more specimen completes my list of the four-footed beasts of fable. That is the Mak, or tapir. Of the habitat of this extraordinary animal my authority is silent. But its peculiarity is worthy of note. Its chief food is iron. This accounts for the hardness of its droppings which are used by lapidaries for polishing the hardest kinds of jade. It is possible that the origin of this fable is to be accounted for by the fact that some igneous mineral in a more or less

decayed form is used for the purpose named, and as nobody could account for its condition they explained it by assuming it to be the droppings of an animal, the rest of which could then easily be imagined, food and all complete.

There are more fabulous birds in Chinese legends than there are beasts. The phœnix has already been mentioned. So far as I know, the Arabian legend in which it rises from its own ashes is not known in the Far East. But its place is taken by other details quite as interesting. In the first place the bird is as rare in China as ever the phœnix was with the Arabs and others. It is only to be found when reason rules mankind. Consequently it is as uncommon as the fabled immaculate official of whom two specimens are to be known in Chinese history. One of these is already dead, and the other not yet born. When the phœnix does come, however, it is followed by all the rest of the feathered tribe, and brings with it prosperity and well-being to the whole country. Would that it might arrive to-morrow. But where is the rule of reason?

In the province of Shansi, and in the *hsien* of Hung-tung there is a bird which is endowed with what seems to be a power readily believed in by the Chinese, and not unknown in earlier times in the West, the power of changing its form. It can throw aside its bird-nature at will, divest itself of its feathers and become a woman. The metamorphosis is so complete that the bird-woman can be mated with a man and live with him as his wife. Should she fly off occasionally he ought not to be surprised, if he is acquainted with the circumstances.

One of the bits of superstition alluded to in a previous chapter (on owls) is connected with the Hiu-liu, a kind of laughing horned owl. This is one of the purely nocturnal kind, lying low during the day. One of its little peculiarities is its fondness for playing spiteful tricks on children. If their clothing is left out at night, the owl will drop some dust on them which has the certain effect of making the child ill. Another more uncanny power possessed by it is its ability to become the abode of some dead man's soul. This in itself should give it supernatural power, but not content with that the Hiu-liu in some marvellous manner adds to its impish attributes by eating finger nails. That explains very fully, and of course quite naturally, why country people always hide their nail cuttings.

Another extraordinary bird is known as the Fire-queller. It has a peculiar screeching cry, but its chief characteristic is its power, if thrown on a fire, of putting it out at once. In Shanghai one of our earliest fire brigade companies called itself, in what is perhaps questionable Chinese, the Mih-ho-

loongs, the "Destroying-fire-dragons," but it is not unlikely that, had they known of the celebrated bird they might have named themselves differently, and more appropriately.

Next comes what surely must be a not distant cousin to Sindbad the Sailor's roc, which thought little of flying away with an elephant. This is the Chinese Tiger-eagle. It has a body as large as that of an ox, and its wings have a spread of 20 ft. As its name implies it is a deadly foe to tigers, leopards, etc.

At Twan-sin-chow there is said to be a strange fish-eating bird which makes its home in the swamps and marshes. Whenever it cries, swarms of mosquitoes issue from its mouth. Hence it has the name of Wan-mu-niao, or Mun-mu-niao, the "Mother of Mosquitoes." It is a bird of considerable value to those who can catch or kill it, for fans made of its feathers have an extraordinary reputation for their mosquito repelling quality. It is quite possible that here we have a bit of perfectly correct natural history mingled with some not unnatural error. It is the swamp or marsh that is the real "mother of mosquitoes": any fish-eating bird frequenting it, and there are many varieties of herons, egrets, bitterns, etc., may well, when calling to its mate whilst stalking through the reeds and grass, drive up flocks of mosquitoes, and thus give rise to the legend. Learned doctors, until Dr. Manson led the way, made not altogether dissimilar mistakes in respect to swamps. They long knew of their malaria-breeding powers, yet they never suspected the mosquito. It is a curious story that, but, of course, it belongs to another category.

Chapter LVII.

FABULOUS CREATURES.—*(Concluded.)*

What seems to be rather a mammal than a bird is the *Fei-sheng*, or "Flying Breeder," whose young, as its name implies, are born alive, and not produced first in the form of eggs. According to the description, the young, born whilst the parent is on the wing, are immediately able to fly after her. It is believed that there is here a merely fabulous story derived from imagination and a sight of some flying squirrels. Chinese midwives say that the use of a claw of this bird-mammal will procure an easy accouchement.

Hunan is credited with the possession, at Yung-chow, of a swallow which during high winds and stormy weather loves to fly in the gusty elements, but as soon as the storm subsides turns to stone again. Hence it is known as the Stone Swallow.

The Oil Squeezer is a native of Kaichow in Shantung. In appearance it might easily be mistaken for a sheldrake floating on the water. About the beginning of summer its body is said to exude a considerable quantity of oil. Hunters search for it on this account. When captured and killed, the bird is squeezed until no more oil can be obtained from it, and then the miraculous element comes in. No sooner is the dried skin thrown on the water than it becomes a living bird once more, and in time, presumbly, supplies another quantum of oil

What ardent fishermen the Chinese are everybody knows who is at all acquainted with them, and as the illimitable ocean yet contains many creatures in all probability quite unknown either to them or to western nations, the appearance in their natural histories of strange fishes is less to be wondered at than is that of beasts and birds. If Westerners have their mermaids, the Chinese have their mermen. They are called *Kiao-jen*, and are found in the southern seas where they are credited with the power to weave a beautiful kind of silky fabric which when hung up in a house ensures coolness to it no matter how torrid the weather may be outside. When this gentle creature weeps, its tears turn to pearls. There is another species of the same kind of animal,

but this is more like a turtle minus the feet. Its little ones when alarmed take refuge in a pouch with which the mother is provided.

There is a connexion, not entirely explained to man's full satisfaction even yet, between the jackal and the lion. The smaller animal is sometimes called the "lion's provider," but many people have a shrewd suspicion that most of the providing is done by the larger, and that the jackal follows only that he may partake of the crumbs from the royal table. In China this relationship exists between a sort of hermit crab and a shrimp. The crab rejoices in the name of the Water Mirror, and wherever it goes the shrimp goes with it, being in fact carried in the stomach of its big friend. When the crab is hungry the shrimp issues forth to forage, and when it has satisfied its hunger comes back again to its living home. Ensconced there, the shrimp seems to supply nourishment as freely to the crab as to itself. If it should happen that the shrimp is killed or unable to return, the crab dies.

Other curious fish stories are those which tell of the Indestructible Winkle, which though it may seem dead of drought will revive on being put into vinegar; of the *Sih-Sih* fish which has an appearance something like that of a magpie with ten wings, and of the *Ho-lo* fish with one head but ten bodies.

Snakes and other reptiles, even more than fish, would be likely to lend themselves to the vivid imagination of an ignorant country people. It is so in all lands, and of course it is so in China, which is rich in reptilia. Thus we have the Round Snake of Kwei-chow, which takes its name from being egg-shaped, and so streaked and painted with five different colours as to resemble a painted landscape. People who see it, unless they know its deadly nature, are irresistibly tempted to pick it up on account of its beauty, thinking it to be merely a beautiful stone. But with the warmth of the body the creature becomes lively, and puts out its head. Then is the danger, for he who is bitten dies. The poison is so virulent that if any of it is spilt on the ground no grass will grow near the place for three years, and all that is necessary to poison arrows effectually is to stick them in the soil there.

Then there is the Square Snake of Kiangsi, which takes the shape of a trunk, squirts an inky fluid at people, and so kills them at once.

Still more marvellous is the Splitter. In England there is a belief not unlike that of the Chinese in this respect. Some English country people probably hold to this day that a snake when cut to pieces has sometimes the power of

reuniting itself. This is the Chinese story: the splitter has a length of about fourteen inches and the circumference of a copper-cash, say about the size of a halfpenny. If a man comes near it, it leaps into the air, and coming down to earth again divides into twelve pieces. (These stories are always precise in detail.) If the man should be so incautious as to pick up one of these segments a head grows out from either end of it, the man is bitten, and inevitably dies. Should he be wary enough to leave so uncanny a creature to itself, the segments afterwards unite again.

Southern China and Annam can boast possession of the wonderful snake known as the Caller, or Calling Snake. Lonely travellers will hear it sometimes crying out, "Where are you from, and where are you going to?" If the man answers, the snake will follow him for several tens of li, and will sneak into his hotel when he reaches it in the evening. But as it invariably carries with it a very offensive smell, the inn-keeper seems to know what to expect. So he asks the traveller, "Did you hear any voice calling to you on the way?" The traveller answers, "Yes." Then the inn-keeper knows exactly what has happened and what to do. He takes a *Wu-kung*, a sort of flying centipede, and puts it in a box near the traveller's pillow. In the night, when the offensive smell shows that the caller is approaching, they open the box and the centipede bounces out, attacks the snake, gives it one bite, and kills it. Should a caller escape this dreadful fate—the penalty of coveting forbidden prey—he may live a very long time, during which period his body grows until it is several thousand catties in weight, after which, if he is killed his fat makes a lamp oil, which when burning defies the wind to blow it out.

Burma and Cochin China have a human-faced snake with the features of a pretty girl. There are two feet growing out from under the neck and these have each five human-looking fingers. If the captor cuts this snake in two it turns instantly into a pretty girl complete. The male of the same breed is said to be green in colour and to have a long beard. Its strength is such that it can coil round and kill a tiger, but it is afraid of the fox which attacks and eats it.

The last of the series is the *Jan*, or boa, of Kiung-chow in the Island of Hainan. As we have seen, boas or pythons are well known in Hongkong and in the south of China generally, and it is not surprising to find folk-lore well supplied with stories of their immense strength, size, and ferocity. The Jan is said to grow to a length of several chang, the chang being in English measure nearly 12 ft. This species is reputed to have a liking for young damsels whom it follows. Knowing this, hunters

in search of it disguise themselves with flowers in their hair, and call as they go, "Hung niang-tsz," a pet name for a pretty girl. When the snake appears, they throw some female garments over it, whereupon it lies still. The hunters taking advantage of its quietude, rapidly chop off its head, and then run away. The death struggles of the monster are terrible to behold. It leaps about and levels everything in its way, even trees being torn up in its struggles.

There is, as we have been told by Dr. Edkins, a characteristic trait to be observed in all Chinese symbolism, in that connected with animals no less than that connected with trees, numbers, philosophy and other things. Whilst that of the ancient Hebrews was directed to the future, that of China looks backward to the past. But men of the present day, with the spectacle of a promised regeneration of China before their eyes, may well ask whether the Chinese also have not now definitely turned their faces towards the time to come, and not towards the time that is gone. The question is, perhaps, the most momentous ever put before the human race. Time alone can answer it.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

The Big Game of Western China.

Whilst sportsmen have turned their attention to most parts of the globe, and in pursuit of big game have penetrated into the uttermost parts of Africa, throughout North America, the Indian Empire, Kashmir, Burma and the Malay States, China has for several reasons remained almost a *terra incognita* to the hunter, who can rarely give first hand information, if any, concerning the game to be found in the west of the Middle Kingdom. Indeed there are vast tracts, and perhaps will always be vast tracts, in the centre of this wonderful old continent which can be visited only by a few, and those not on pleasure bent. The enormous distances to be traversed and the difficulties of travel, the attitude of the Government in the past, and the considerable expense and time involved, have all contributed to deter sportsmen from roaming over the country, and it may be interesting therefore to say something of the big game which is to be found in these mountains which have few attractions to any but those who go there for purposes other than pleasure. And first a few words about the physical features of the far west, which of course, in topographical details, varies considerably.

From the high plateau region of Koko-Nor province (a part of Amdoa, Outer Tibet) there stretches eastwards through Kansu, Shensi, and thence into Honan a high range of mountains, known in Kansu as the Pe-ling, and east of that province as the Sin-ling range; and this forms the natural barrier between northern and southern China, between the basin of the Yellow River and the Yangtze which it separates for several hundred miles. To the south, forming a natural division between the provinces of Kansu and Shensi in the north and Szechwan in the south, a second rather lower range extends eastward from the plateau, becoming broken up in the province of Hupeh. Both these ridges rise to considerably greater altitudes in the west, where they strike off from the plateau, than further east, and they are also far more thickly forested as one reaches their western limits. Decreasing in height and extent as they stretch eastwards, they eventually fray out and descend gradually into the eastern plain. Still further south, in

Szechwan, several high mountain chains bend round and run parallel to one another in a north and south direction, forming the complicated mountain system of the Mantze country. These various ranges of mountains are inhabited by numerous kinds of big game or medium sized game, but it must be borne in mind that even when the mountains have been reached, their enormous extent, the difficulties of supply and transport, and the frequent impossibility of obtaining accurate information locally, make hunting trips a considerable enterprise and involve them in no little expense. Nevertheless, given sufficient time in one locality, thus enabling the hunter to cover plenty of ground and become thoroughly acquained with the district, there is no doubt that any amount of good shooting is to be obtained in western China. In the Sin-ling mountains west of Sian-fu were leopard *(Felis pardus)* third in point of size in the cat tribe, and hog *(Sus* species). The leopard of course, like all the cat tribe, is a nocturnal animal, and therefore not commonly met with. However, it has an extensive range throughout the mountainous regions of China, and we heard stories of its depredations everywhere, for it inspires a wholesome dread in the native mind. Moreover, in the big cities of the west, splendid skins may always be bought for eight or ten taels apiece, those being specially prized in which the black markings form complete rings (an uncommon occurrence) and the central areola is of a shade different from that of the ground colour. Unfortunately the Chinese are blind to the beauties of completeness and even to the advantage of conforming reasonably to the canons of zoology: after skinning the entire animal out through the mouth, under the foolish impression that it is better to wrench the skin altogether out of shape rather than cut it anywhere, they then proceed to contradict themselves by cutting off the claws, as being mere useless appendages, and mutilating the heads; moreover as they frequently neglect to remove the tail bones, the fur is very apt to come out of the tail, and the skins are, on the whole, very imperfect. A few days north of Kin-tsi-kuan, on the Tan river, whilst working at a small mountain village, a leopard was brought in to us. It had recently descended from the mountains and killed a lamb, leaving half the carcass for another time; whereupon the shepherds promptly poisoned it against his majesty's return. The leopard duly returned to finish his repast, unsuspiciously began again upon the carcass, now liberally spread with arsenic, and quietly died. It does not sound a very sporting way of dealing with the vicious beast, but naturally the natives are more concerned with their flocks than with sport. Not long afterwards we were working at a lovely spot just

under the ridge which forms the actual watershed, in this neighbourhood, between the Yellow River and the Yangtze. At nine o'clock one brilliant night, just as we were turning in to bed, a man rushed out of his hut on the other side of the valley, about a hundred yards distant, screaming at the top of his voice, "Big leopard! Big leopard!" We tumbled out as quickly as possible, but the moon was hardly up, and not knowing which way the animal had gone, we were at a loss: moreover he had had a few minutes start, which by itself was sufficient to have given him time to slip back into the mountains unobserved. It appeared that the man, who kept his pig in a pen just outside the door, and not, as is usually the case, in his room, heard the pig squealing in a most heart-breaking manner, and had rushed out in time to see the leopard putting his paw between the doors of the pen; and such a surprising noise did he make, that the animal had at once slunk off abashed. Though the man was in reality nearly scared out of his wits, whether on his own behalf or for the safety of his bacon, and rushing blindly to us for aid, knowing our business, one cannot but admire his pluck in thus coming out unarmed at night to the rescue of the unfortunate pig; the leopard, though by no means brave, is certainly an extremely savage animal, though, like the shark and other ferocious beasts, he seems to be scared at a little bluster, and will retreat rather than investigate a novelty. The man was quite sure this marauder would come back, however, so I agreed to take a rifle and lie in wait, for it was a magnificent moonlight night, though bitterly cold. I lay in ambush, guarding that wretched pig and awaiting the proud moment when I should shoot a leopard, till 2 a.m., by which time I was stiff with cold, for there was something like 15 degrees of frost out in the open; but no leopard came. So I turned back and went to bed fervently blessing the old man, leopards in general, and pigs in particular. I have not shot a leopard yet. The common leopard extends over the greater part of mountainous Asia, and though the Tibetans on the Kansu border always have their sheepskin coats lined with a strip of leopard put along the edge, the Chinese do not seem to make use of the skins for clothing. Most of the leopard skins sold in Western China, at Tow-chow, Chengtu, Tatsienlu, and other big trading centres, come from Tibet, for the Chinese, besides not being great hunters, are, as a rule, prodigiously afraid of the animal, which in many parts is a continual source of danger to the flocks. Parties of hunters occasionally sally forth to exterminate a particularly bold depredator, and at one place where we stayed in southern Kansu, two men had recently come to grief trying to bring the local leopard to book, for he had without warning sprung out on

them from the bushes, and mauled them so badly that one subsequently died. Black leopards occur—a mere variety of the ordinary spotted one, in fact a simple case of melanism, but I never saw the skin of such a one out in the west. In Tatsienlu however, we saw a single skin of the snow leopard (*Felis uncia*) of the central Asian plateau, and it had doubtless come from the Mantze mountains. It is certainly a most handsome animal. The Sin-ling range east of Sian-fu consists of rounded water-worn peaks, not above 7,000 feet in altitude, with deep but comparatively wide valleys between. The lower mountain slopes are extremely barren, save here and there where ancestral graves had determined the salvation of a few clumps of conifers: for the most part they supported a grassy vegetation only, and were scarcely cultivated, though maize apparently requires so little depth of earth that it can be grown on almost any hillside however steep. The summits of these mountains, however, from 6,000 to 7,000 feet high, were crowned with a dense scrub of deciduous trees—oak, willow, hazel, chestnut and the like—which in summer must form an impenetrable bush from ten to fifteen feet in height. Here were to be found large "sounders" of wild hog, which never, at least inwinter, extend above the limits of cultivation, so that they can be conveniently hunted from headquarters in the valley. Whether it is the European or the Indian hog (an almost identical species or an entirely different species) does not seem very certain, for the genus *Sus* is considerably involved. In any case the animal ranges all through Shensi and Kansu, and right away south into Szechwan, being commonly met with on Omi-san and the neighbouring mountains bordering the Lolo country. A female, weighing between three and four hundred pounds, was shot near Tai-pei-san in January, this being the only one of a number seen which we secured. Around Tai-pei they did not seem to extend above 8,000 feet nor below 4,000 feet, and could be followed for miles along the summits of the tree clad ridges by means of their lairs and rootings. This was the last we saw of them, though I came across fresh tracks near the summit of Omi-san, seven months later. In summer, when the hogs come down amongst the crops, they do an immense amount of damage, and it is customary to build shelters in their neighbourhood, and watch them night and day, beating gongs and firing off crackers when they approach; at that season it is of course difficult to see them, though they are by no means stealthy animals. The Chinese do not seem to hunt even the objectionable wild hog extensively however, and only one skin was ever shown to us: domestic hogs are so common, and so cheaply fed—or starved—that it is

probably not worth the trouble in spite of the damage they cause, though raiding parties occasionally attempt to exterminate them locally, with little success of course. Curiously enough, we came across no deer in our first journey over the Sin-ling range, though west of Sian they are plentiful. Foxes were common, but wolves are only occasionally meet with in these parts, and there is hardly sufficient cover for anything else.

Crossing the plain after passing through Sian-fu, we kept on a south-westerly course in order to get back to the Sin-ling range, as near to Tai-pei-san as possible; for we had heard the mountains of that neighbourhood well spoken of as a hunting centre. Two days west of the capital bird life became extraordinarily abundant in the rice lands, cranes, swan, herons, bustard, geese, mallard and teal being met with in immense flocks; naturally, however, there is no cover in this cultivated region, so that we could not expect to find big game here. Hares there were, springing up from behind almost any grassy grave mound one chose to investigate, and occasionally a fox or a wolf. These latter lay hidden in the stony water-courses, now dry, which frequently interrupted the continuity of the loess as we drew nearer to the mountains; by day they slept, vigilant nevertheless, wandering forth after nightfall to attack some lonely farm house. The Chinese wolf, which is identical with the species inhabiting Europe and North America (*Canis lupus*), this animal being in fact circumpolar in distribution, differs from the forest wolf of Siberian and Canadian forests in being far less gregarious; the wolves of China hunt singly or in couples, never in packs. I once saw three together early one January morning, calmly trotting in single file up the valley to the mountains after a night's raid, but that was probably quite exceptional. The wolf is extremely common in parts of Shensi and Shansi, and in time of famine becomes particularly fierce and desperate. It is quite a common event for two of them to enter a village, approach the first house, sneak inside as soon as the women have turned their backs, and take the baby from the *k'ang*: in the same way children playing in front of the doorway are sometimes snatched up and made off with under their parents' eyes. Thus we came across a man with the lower part of his face missing on one side, and were informed that he had been bitten by a wolf when he was a child. Dogs, numerous as they usually are in a Chinese village, are almost useless on these occasions, as the native wonk is a rank coward, always afraid to take the initiative in attack: moreover he seems quite incapable of acting in concert with his fellows. In Kansu we saw a rather curious instance of this. Early one morning, whilst

on the road, we observed a large wolf suddenly start out of a side valley, where several labourers were at work, and lope up the hillside behind: whereupon being observed by the men, three dogs were at once dispatched in pursuit. Unfortunately one of them easily outstripped the other two and the wolf as well, and cutting across so as to intercept him, must inevitably have stopped him and made him give battle, whilst a minute's delay would have been ample to allow the other two dogs to come up and join in. But just as the attack seemed imminent, the wolf turned, and with a snarl bared his teeth: the pursuer at once became the fugitive, and after that there was no possibility of the dogs' doing anything. The wolf now trotted slowly over the hill with his tail between his legs, and the dogs thenceforth kept discreetly in the rear, trying to appear brave and ready for the combat, whilst showing the white feather as soon as he made even a feint at turning on them. Eventually he stopped on the brow of the hill, sat on his haunches facing his tormentors, and contemplated his escape for a few minutes before disappearing: but even now the dogs were much too scared to rush in together, though the wolf would have stood little chance against the three of them. We saw the whole scene very plainly, for we were within fifty yards of the wolf when he first got up. We put up three other wolves on various occasions, and in each case singly. In some parts every district seems to be saddled with its old man of the sea in the shape of its own local wolf, of which the inhabitants are prodigiously afraid. The common wolf varies considerably even in the same regions of its extensive distribution, and a variety of five skins may be bought in the interior for from three to five taels each. They are tawny in their general ground colour, never grey, frequently with black ears.

Four days' march west of Sian we struck a pass over the Sin-ling, and after climbing all day, found ourselves in the heart of the mountains again, the country here being particularly wild, the mountain tops thinly forested. The trail had been very narrow in many places, passing between high rocks and fallen boulders, and frequently rendered very treacherous where streams had come down across the trail and frozen to solid ice slopes; it was Boxing Day, and the weather had turned bitterly cold. However the mountains looked splendid for big game, and at the end of a weary day we were congratulating ourselves, when news was brought that the mules had turned back to the starting point, having found the route impassable. This was not cheerful, and we struggled back in five hours, darkness falling long before we reached the inn, cold and bruised from many a tumble on the icy trail. However there was nothing for it and we took to the

plain again next day, finding a second pass two days' march to the west. This appeared more encouraging, for we struck up a fair-sized valley, and on the second day reached the small village of Ling-t'ai-miao at the foot of Tai-pei-san itself. Here was an ideal spot for our purpose. The village stood about 3,000 feet above sea level, and the valley was bounded by grassy hills rising some four or five thousand feet higher. Behind lay the Tai-pei-san range, separated by another deep valley, and upon these mountains were dense forests of deciduous trees—willows, birches, hazels, and many others, giving place towards the summit to Conifers alone, and those more or less dwarfed by the prevailing winds which howl across the summit of Tai-pei. On the lower hills, wild hog, already referred to, were common, and the small "grass-deer", to translate the Chinese name literally, were abundant. This deer was originally found in the mountains of northern China during the course of the Duke of Bedford's Exploration of Eastern Asia, and has been named *Capriolus Bedfordi*, in honour of the President of the Zoological Society. It is a small animal, standing not more than three feet high at the shoulder; the tail is rather shorter than usual, and the antlers (at this season in the velvet) small and three-pointed. Like most deer this species is gregarious, but we rarely saw more than a pair together. The species does not seem to extend above 8,000 feet, at least in the winter, though it sometimes descends right down into the valleys. Its usual habitat however is the grassy hill tops and thickets. When disturbed it utters a short sharp bark, very like that of a gruff dog, but these creatures were so tame that it was easy to approach within a range of a hundred yards, and the firing of a rifle had no effect on them whatever—except of course when a bullet found its billet. Consequently one could lie down and pump a magazine-full of lead at them, whilst they stood there staring; even when they did start off, they never ran far, but soon halted and continued to stare. Evidently they know well that the native weapon is not usually discharged at a range of more than 30 yards, and a magazine rifle firing soft-nosed bullets at a range of 2,000 yards is still quite a novelty to them. This *Capriolus* was even more common to the south-east of Min-chow in Kansu, then in the neighbour-hood of Tai-pei; but after the middle of April we saw no more of them.

Another common animal on these mountains is the diminutive musk-deer (*Moschus sifanicus*), though we never saw one, and only obtained a single specimen from the mountains south of the Tow river, on the Tibet border. However we came across its neat little tracks everywhere in the snow, and frequently met with the traps which the native hunters set for them—a noose arranged to

fly up and take the animal by the leg as soon as he breaks a string stretched across his path. The musk-deer stands less than two feet high at the shoulder, and is devoid of horns (a peculiarity amongst deer which it shares with the water-deer of the Yangtze, *Hydropotes inermis*) the male bearing instead a pair of sharp tusks, often as much as three inches in length—a second peculiarity which it shares with the *Hydropotes*. Another external peculiarity in the male is the musk-sac, a gland in the skin of the abdomen, which when dried yields commercial musk, a valuable medicine alike to Tibetans and Chinese, selling for almost its weight in silver in the cities. It is said that the musk deer knows for what it is persecuted, and that when brought to bay, it will turn its head and rip open its own musk-sac with its long teeth. The musk deer extends down into Szechwan also, but keeps altogether to higher altitudes than *Capriolus Bedfordi*—not less than 8000 feet even in winter. The third species of deer met with was David's deer, Chinese *ma-lo* or "horse deer" of the Tibet border and Manchuria. The official title is *Cervus Davidianus*, and he is by far the handsomest of the Chinese deer. David's deer inhabits the high moutains all the way up the Tibet border, ranging between 10,000 and 14,000 feet or even less. He stands quite four feet high at the shoulder, and has an unusually long tail: the hair soft and thick, uniformly dark above: and a technical peculiarity distinguishes the horns of this species from all other Asiatic representatives. The horns are much prized for medicine by the Chinese, not indeed in the districts where the animal is known (it is the old story of the prophet in his own country) but in places like Canton were they have never seen such an uncouth object as a deer's antler before: so that its efficacy presumably lies in its novelty, and in the ignorance which it consequently puddles for the moment. We met half a dozen mule loads of these patent medicines coming down from Sining, where the *ma-lo* is abundant. The animal is by no means easy to stalk, for he is extremely vigilant, and runs at a tremendous pace. We frequently saw them in batches of three or even four together, but failed to secure a specimen. This was in the *Fen-tsi* country south of the Tow river: there were none around Tai-pei-san—one has to go much further west. The *ma-lo* is a favourite in captivity, and the native princes are fond of keeping them, though they never become very tame. The Prince of Choni however had one which would eat out of my hand and even let me pat its neck (under protest) and the King of Kia-la, who resides at Tatsienlu, had three of them, though these were rather fierce animals, and were kept tied up. There are also several in the Imperial Hunting Park, Peking.

Bears are by no means rare in the western parts of the Sin-ling range, and in the Pe-ling right away into Tibet. They occur throughout the parallel ranges of Szechwan, down into Yunnan, and shortly one may say throughout the mountains of Western China and the Central Asian plateau, becoming more plentiful in the most desolate regions. They are of course not easily found, since they hibernate during the winter and in summer keep to the most thickly forested country, or to the bleakest plateau land; so that there was no chance of our meeting with a bear on Tai-pei-san, though the hunters told us they were found there, and we promised them untold wealth to unearth one. The black bear referred to by the natives is probably the Himalayan bear, or a variety of it *(Ursus torquatus)*, since they spoke of white on the breast and paws; but the common brown bear of Europe and Asia is almost certainly to be found here *(Ursus arctos)* having a wide and probably continuous distribution over the mountainous regions of Eurasia north of the Himalaya, from the British Isles (where of course it is now extinct) to Kamschatka. Bears do not seem to be sufficiently common in China proper to cause extensive damage to crops, and this no doubt accounts for the fact that the native hunters do not eagerly seek out the animal to destroy it: I do not remember to have seen a single skin for sale. In Kansu we heard of two intrepid hunters who had gone after one for the sake of its skin, and one of them had been rather badly mauled only a couple of days before our arrival in the district. One of the consuls in Chengtu had also shot one, in the Sung-pan district: but generally speaking, though widely distributed they are not often met with, and one needs to go a long way west for them, though the black bear does not occur at all in Tibet, and the one frequently referred to by Tibetan travellers is presumably the brown bear.

The Tai-pei *massif* consists of a long ridge trending roughly north-east and south-west, across the main axis of the Sin-ling range, terminating on either flank in tremendous precipices: from the top, one could look straight down into the defiles below, but there was no way of reaching them from above except by way of one or two precipitous gullies jammed full of angular granite blocks of scree material fallen from above, for, so far as I was able to observe, the mountain seemed to be composed of limestone capped with granite, or some such coarse-grained igneous rock. Given off from the main ridge was a number of spurs, their summits hewn into strange aiguilles and pinnacles, and these dropped abruptly away sheer into the gullies below in huge bare walls of limestone. Firs and larches clung amongst the rocks of the knife-like ridges, and covered the summits of the mountains

together with a thick undergrowth of juniper bushes. The less abrupt slopes and hollows at lower altitudes were clothed with a dense tangle of shrubs and trees, conspicuous amongst which were the copper birch, willows, rose bushes, and many others: whilst the gullies supported ledges of turf and clumps of bamboo wherever they could find foothold. Everything above seven thousand feet was now, in January, under snow which, on the summit, was quite a foot deep, and two or three times that depth in the drifts. Consequently progress up the steep slopes, especially where the snow had been stamped hard by wood-cutters and hunters, was extremely slow, though coming down was distinctly rapid, and often ended in one's being rolled in the snow. The gullies too, where the crevices between the slippery blocks of stone had been covered with a thin coating of snow were treacherous. Nevertheless in the intervals between the snowstorms, the weather was magnificent, and though the wind blowing up the gullies of Tai-pei, particularly at night, was one of those trials of endurance one does not want to experience twice in a life-time if one can help it, yet big-game hunting over these rugged peaks was interesting enough. However, I should recommend the autumn for a similar trip to other aspirants, as it is necessary to camp out in a cave during such a hunting trip, on account of the extent of territory to be covered.

Perhaps one of the rarest animals which lurked amongst these rock strewn forests and precipices—for they usually go about alone or in pairs, was a kind of antelope, which however, except for its longer tail, is more like a goat in appearance and proportions. This is the goral (genus *Cemas*), a ruminant ranging from the outer spurs of the Himalayas to eastern Tibet, northern China (*via* the Sin-ling), and thence to Amurland; but not very abundant anywhere except perhaps in the Pamirs. There are several species, the Chinese one being chiefly distinguished by its longer tail. It is a small animal, not much bigger than the musk-deer—say, twenty-eight to thirty inches high at the shoulder, of a general dark grey or brown hue above, with a darker stripe down the nape of the neck and along the middle of the back. There is no beard and the horns are short and simple, more like those of a chamois than of a goat, except that the tip is not curved back: they are not above six inches long, and are concentrically ribbed. The gorals, in fact, to some extent connect the goats with the antelopes. We saw one of these animals amongst the trees, perhaps a thousand yards distant, but as we were near the summit of one spur and he was almost at the foot of the next, separated by a chasm several hundred feet deep, there was little chance of getting him, or even of getting a shot at him. The native hunters, however, spent some days in pursuit

of these rock scramblers for us, and, as illustrating the extreme inaccessibility of the crags these animals frequent, of three specimens shot, they were only able to recover one, and he had broken one of his horns and several bones in a severe fall. The goral in fact, when pursued, seems to delight in climbing to the summit of the most acicular pinnacle to hand, as though determined not to be captured dead or alive. Otherwise he loves the grassy slopes and ledges amongst the screes and gullies.

Quite the most extraordinary animal met with in these mountains is the takin (genus *Budorcas*), a heavily built and comparatively large animal, standing not less than three and a half feet high at the shoulder. Its rather thick matted hair is tawny in colour (at least in the Shensi species), rather long, as in the yak (though not so long as that,) and coarse in texture. The big black horns rise close together, and growing out horizontally, turn straight backwards in the same plane. The face is curiously shaped, and the thick lips and enormous nostrils give the animal a most grotesque appearance. The *Budorcas* is easily recognized amongst bovine ruminants by the extremely short goat-like tail, and short sturdily built legs supporting the big, heavy body. It goes about in large herds of twenty or thirty, or even more, though stray animals or odd pairs are occasionally met with. Not the least remarkable characterstics of the animal are its extraordinary agility on the snow-covered screes, and a wonderful vitality. The ponderous beast, as I was able to observe for myself when a herd we had tracked was fired into, is as sure-footed as a goat, and scrambles down the steepest places with marvellous rapidity. As for its vitality, the hunters had a great story to tell of how they had "killed" an animal stone dead with about four bullets in him one evening, and left him lying on the snow overnight; on returning for him next morning, however, they were astonished to find that he had cleared off under cover of darkness, having meanwhile completely recovered from his quite temporary indisposition —perhaps a piece of realistic foxing to stay further pellets. Consequently it is now the practice amongst these hunters to tie the animal down if he is going to be left for the night, so that if he should come to life again, he will not be able to get away. Unfortunately I am not able to give many details about the habits of these animals since we only had a view of the herd which we were pursuing for about five minutes, after a long day spent in tracking it. The only animal that was hit received a soft nosed bullet somewhere in the back at a range of about a hundred and fifty yards; he doubled up, slid down, lay on his back with his legs beating the air wildly, rolled over, got up, and—ran away! We

followed the blood marks in the snow for some distance, but the wounded animal got clean away with the rest of the herd. The *Budorcas* cannot however be a difficult animal to hunt, for the native hunters, who can do practically no execution at a range of more than forty yards, shot numbers of them, and they shot three stray specimens for us. Our largest male scaled somewhere between four and five hundred pounds, and it took three of us over three hours' work simply to rip the skin off him. The distribution of this curious ruminant seems to be discontinuous, or at least it is very local; the Shensi hunters declared that it was confined to Tai-pei-san, but such is not the case with the genus at any rate, though it is possible that the Shensi species is distinct from that found much further west. We did not again hear of the animal till we reached the high limestone ranges of south western Kansu, and here the *Budorcas* was described as a piebald or mottled animal. It is fairly common in some parts of southern and western Szechwan also, and the American Consul at Chung-king was credited with having been the first man to buy a specimen from the natives and claim to have shot it himself. No doubt our three specimens will shed a little more light on the affinities of this obscure animal, though they can hardly add to our knowledge of its habits and mode of life.

Over the crest of the watershed, a day's march beyond the village of Ling-t'ai-miao, the rugged peaks and screes which typify the Tai-pei-san ridge cease, and we travel for several days through deep limestone gorges, the cliffs towering so high above us that in many places it is impossible to obtain any idea of the mountains behind. The civet cat seemed to be particularly abundant in these regions, judging by the number of skins brought to us. The natives know it, in these parts at any rate, by the extraordinary name of "nine jointed donkey," on account of the nine rings, alternately black and white, with which the tail is marked: though where the resemblance to a donkey is derived from would puzzle most people. The wild cat is also comparatively common in these mountains, though it is of no particular interest beyond showing the extreme limits in variation to which a species can run. One day the natives brought in a badger, which for some reason had wandered out of his winter quarters, and being doubtless sluggish in his movements consequent upon a prolonged slumber, was killed by the men. The Hanchong plain to the south of the Sin-ling was less stocked with game than the Sian plain had been, though cranes and bustard were abundant: and right up through Kansu, we came across nothing new till we reached Choni, on the borders of the Tibetan territory, though the

small "grass-deer," wolves, and foxes were common locally. Around Choni, however, to the south of the Tow river, which forms a very natural geographical as well as physical barrier between China and Tibet, the aspect of the country changed entirely. Here were high mountains rising tier beyond tier till they gradually topped the snow line at perhaps 18,000 feet, where the Pei-ling range itself rose up like a wall of rock. The north slopes of these mountains were covered with fir forests, though the exposed Southern slopes were too dry to support tree growth. Towards the heads of the tributary valleys the streams bored through magnificent gorges, for the mountains were built up mainly of limestone (on a base of metamorphic rocks) which showed up in wonderful cliffs and towers. Higher up in the *Fen-tsi* country beyond the rim of the grass plateau, the Tow itself flowed between high forested cliffs of metamorphic rocks which had been buckled and crumpled in a most extraordinary way by colossal subterranean forces. All was now under snow, and a more beautiful sight than these great mountains with the sweeps of fir trees daintily festooned with dazzling streamers of snow, the gaunt cliffs and towers of limestone rising behind, and the grey ribbon of water crashing between its ice-choked banks, it would be difficult to imagine. In the lower, warmer valleys not above 10,000 feet were the *ma-lo* or "horse-deer" (*Cervus Davidianus*) already referred to. They kept clear of the forests, wandering over the grass-covered hills and keeping a sharp look-out. We saw three together one morning, but as they saw us as soon as we saw them, they were scampering up the hillside as soon as we located them, and one might as well try to catch up with a race horse as with a *ma-lo*. On another occasion we saw five in a bunch at fairly close quarters; that was in the thickets, but we hadn't a gun, and they couldn't wait.

The most enigmatical animal of these forested mountains was one of which we were shown the photograph by a missionary in Tow-chow: he had shot it himself a couple of years previously, but was unable to tell us what it was: and with only a photograph to go upon, I can furnish but meagre information for purposes of identification, nor have I any more idea now than I had then as to what the beast really is. It may be described as a maned goat, the long mane being indeed the most conspicuous and extraordinary characteristic of the animal; perhaps the size of the goral already spoken of, or rather smaller, with short horns, projecting straight upwards and backwards as in that animal—a hollow-horned ruminant anyhow. Its colour appeared to be black and white and its hair was distinctly long even for a goat. The animal is by no means common I believe, and I have failed to identify it

from the few notes I have, so that it is not necessary to do more than mention it here. Above 14,000 feet, in the regions of the great limestone precipices, above the limit of tree growth, out on the wind-swept grass-covered mountain tops, lived the precipice sheep: and few animals are better game, or more difficult to shoot than these sheep of the Tibet border country. From the foot of a precipice perhaps 500 feet high we looked up to the summit one day, and saw one of these sheep peering over the summit of the ridge; his magnificent curved horns were plainly silhouetted against the sky-line. Again on a steeply sloping grassland scree (now of course under a foot or more of snow) we came across a bunch of them, but on seeing us several hundred yards distant, they bolted up the slope to the jagged crest of the ridge and were soon dispersed and lost amongst the crags. Three days we spent hunting these sheep, floundering knee-deep through the snow drifts up on the summits of these mountains, toiling up the long valleys, wading half-frozen streams, plunging through forests of fir and bush, ranging in altitude from the valley where we were quartered at about 10,000 feet to beyond the tree belt at about 15,000 feet. And this was in April, so that the summer must be brief in these mountains. It is naturally difficult to say for certain what this sheep is, since we did not obtain a specimen, but it is quite possibly the Tibetan argali (*Ovis Hodgsoni*) which inhabits the Tibetan plateau from the northern Ladak to the districts northwards of Sikkim, and so, we may suppose, eastwards through the northern parts of outer Tibet to the geographical borders of western China. It prefers mountains which expose an abundance of naked rock (such as limestone mountains always do) but have their slopes more or less forested: in summer, at least, it does not descend below 15,000 feeet, but the Tibetan hunters informed us that in the winter they had been shot in close proximity to the village, as low down as 12,000 feet. Nevertheless, with all their skill, and with the advantage of spending days together up in the mountains, the hunters do not shoot a great number of these wary rock scramblers. The argali is one of the largest sheep known, being comparable in size to a donkey.

A very closely-allied species—perhaps a mere variety, inhabits Mongolia and parts of southern Siberia, so that if the species described above is not the true *O. Hodgsoni* of Tibet, it is likely to be an intermediate species, linking *O. Hodgsoni* of Anterior Tibet to *O. Ammon* of Mongolia: on the other hand, it may be observed that for geographical considerations alone there is no reason why the one species should not have a continuous distribution from the northern slopes of the Himalayas

through the mountains of eastern Tibet to the Pe-ling and Nan Shan ranges, and thence into Mongolia and Siberia. Unfortunately, not having obtained a specimen we have no proof for either assertion. It is fair to assume that bears and other animals were to found in these wild mountains in the summer, and that by penetrating a little farther in towards the south west, we might have come across several more species of precipice climbers. For the extent of uninhabited and uninhabitable country in these regions, and the diversity of topographical features, must be seen to be believed. Away from the Tow river however, in a direction north-west from Tow-chow, the scene changes entirely, for here the edge of the great grassland plateau which stretches westwards in an unbroken succession of rolling steppes for hundreds of miles, is reached. This plateau, in winter at least, is the abomination of desolation, a wind-swept treeless land of extreme temperatures, scorched by the summer sun. frozen under the driving snowstorms for five months in the year. Here the marmot (*Marmotes* species) and the Tibetan hare—a beautiful little siver-grey fellow—scampered about amongst their burrows which honey-combed the hillsides. and a species of antelope (presumably a gazelle) wandered in considerable herds, often twenty or more together, over the barren steppes. We shot one antelope, a small russet-brown creature not much bigger than the musk-deer, but unfortunately it was a female, and therefore hornless. It is quite likely, however, that the aminal will prove to be the goa or Tibetan gazelle (*Gazella picticaudata*), but of this I cannot be certain.

Curiously enough, after 21st April, on which date we left Min-chow for the south, passing abruptly from winter into summer with scarcely a break for spring, we saw no wild animal larger than a fair-sized monkey. Not that there was no big game in the mountains of the south, but rather that considering the impenetrability of the vegetation, we thought it scarcely worth while to spend the necessary time hunting, and some of the most likely districts we were compelled to pass through without stopping. I have sometimes wondered, when reading of elephant hunting in equatorial Africa, how the hunters are able to follow these animals through the intricacies of the jungle, and come up with them after perhaps several days' chase; for in western China it seemed impossible to find anything, let alone follow it in the thickets which clothed the mountains during the summer. But on consideration we may note several points of difference in the two cases. I recall the jungles of Borneo, and on comparing them with the dense "bush" of western Szechwan note that whilst there is no comparison in the exuberance

and variety of the vegetation in the two cases, yet the former is in reality the easier to penetrate, for the very reason that that great development of the lofty vegetation in the one case makes the interior of the forest so dark that the undergrowth has little chance to establish itself, and hence one can usually see some yards ahead, and make fair progress; the solid wall of vegetation which the outside of a tropical jungle presents is no index to the conditions inside. The shrub vegetation of western China, however, attains no great height, and though the absence of conspicuous trees is probably in all cases due to human interference, yet in those places where the forests still remain intact, undergrowth and shrub prevail at the expense of trees. This "bush," averaging ten or twelve feet in height, is composed of small trees and shrubs profusely entangled with creepers and filled in with a considerable herbaceous undergrowth which here receives sufficient light to develop. Consequently it is really more difficult to hunt big game through such a tangle than through a tropical jungle, especially since the game is likely to be considerably less bulky than that which inhabits the forces of equatorial regions. On the other hand, were one to devote all one's time to it as does the ivory hunter, no doubt one could hunt big game over these mountains even in the summer: but it is as well to bear in mind that it is necessary to force one's way bodily through the "bush," a proceeding which is naturally rather noisy, and also that it is impossible to see anything with any certainty ten yards ahead. All things considered then, the summer is emphatically not the season for big game hunting in western China: the ideal time is autumn, in the north at any rate, for the winters there are extremely rigorous.

Passing through southern Kansu we stopped for some days south of Pikow, at the edge of the limestone wall which bars the way into what is geographically Tibet. This magnificent country of huge bald cliffs alternating with densely forested slopes harbours a good deal of genuine big game—musk-deer, mountain-sheep, and *Budorcas*, all of which I found the spoor of, besides several semi-fabulous monsters which became known to us chiefly through local tradition. The most curious of these possibly fictitious beasts, which were spoken of quite seriously by the natives, was a medium-sized animal with long red hair, which lived on monkeys! (Incidentally this goes to show that there are monkeys as far north as this in western China, thought they probably do not extend north of the main watershed between the Yangtze and the Yellow River.) But though the zoologist may be inclined to scoff (I am inclined to think however that no man with any real scientific knowledge and training would

scoff) at native reports, yet as a matter of fact in almost every case in which the hunters told us of the existence of uncouth animals, they were able to make good their words, much to the astonishment of our leader, who had apparently never heard of any other wild animals than pigs and deer: moreover, the traveller in far western China will be shown skins that probably no zoologist in Europe could place, and there was shown us at least a skin to bolster up the claim of the monkey-eater to scientific recognition. Here then is a magnificent chance for someone who has time and money, not to mention skill and patience, to investigate the identity of this curious animal, the existence of which I am ready to guarantee without upholding any of the popular stories as to its habits. If it does really live on monkeys it is presumbly an arboreal animal, and the name "sloth" comes instinctively to one's mind; but a carnivorous sloth would be a curiousity indeed! Can it be a giant vampire? These ranges of south-western Kansu and northern Szechwan stretching away to the Great Snowy Mountains which form the rim of the grassland plateau beyond Sung-pan, would repay close investigation; but such investigation is naturally a considerable undertaking in a country of such distances and difficulty, for these forested mountains may be put down as uninhabited for many hundreds of square miles. In one of the rapid mountain rivers of northern Szechwan I saw an otter swimming down with the current; it is astonishing how long these animals can keep under water, and also how they seem able to go through big rapids without material damage, though they must be severely buffeted. This animal dived at the least suspicious movement on my part, and refused to come anywhere near the shore; like most carnivorous animals, he did not care to be watched.

Though we actually saw only two wild animals of any size in Szechwan, and those comparatively small, yet this is undoubtedly one of the richest provinces in China for the big-game hunter; Szechwan and Yunan are the mountainous provinces *par excellence*. In the mountains above Tatsienlu at an altitude of about 15,000 feet we came across a curious wild dog of a foxy red colour, an inhabitant of the rhododendron thickets, though it probably descends to considerably lower elevations in the winter, when all around Tatsienlu is under snow. The animal was sufficiently unacquainted with man to remain watching within easy rifle range, but refused to come within gunshot. In winter the mountain-sheep come down the hillsides till they are visible from the city, though in the summer one has to go some distance for them. Another curious little animal of this region is the "snow-pig" (to translate the Chinese name

literally), a name which, coming from a people who profess to see a resemblance between a civet-cat and a donkey, conveys little reliable information as to its true relationship; and what the animal is in more exact terms we failed to elicit. We found the spoor of the mountain-sheep (or goat) of these parts on several occasions, and two of these animals were actually seen in the thickets, though we failed to come up with them. The King of Kia-la, one of the tribal potentates of Tatsienlu, kept three compartively tame *ma-lo* at his summer palace, a few miles out of the city, and he also had the skull of a *Budorca* on view, so that it is reasonable to suppose, indeed the natives informed us, that this animal was found locally or not above two days' travel distant. It was said to be piebald, however, the male and female being easily distinguished, whereas our Shensi species were uniformly tawny the male and female being similar, except in point of size. The private autocrat referred to above kept a regular menagerie and dogs' home: beside the *ma-lo* he had between twenty and thirty dogs, several birds, a monkey, and one or two other creatures which combined to make a visit to his place quite an exhilarating entertainment. Did one go systematically through all the skins which are on view in Tatsienlu, most of which come from the mountains lying between this city and Batang, one would doubtless come across some curiosities as well as some rarities—the snow-leopard for example, to mention only one.

Not far from Ya-chow, in south-western Szechwan, is a most curious table-mountain which we unfortunately had no time to visit, though we obtained a good view of it from the summit of Omi-san, thirty or forty miles to the east. Wa-wa-san, as it is called, is well forested, and is said to be a great place for big *Budorcas*, hog deer, leopard and other animals. Mr. Weiss, German Consul at Chengtu, had, I believe, visited it, with highly successful results. Omi-san itself boasts big game—I found any number of hog tracks amongst the bush, at any rate, and leopards are comparatively common in these regions. The sacred Omi itself however, is probably too much in the public eye to be very popular with such shy animals, and two peaks beyond, known respectively as the second and third Omi, are more likely hunting grounds. Tigers, though extremely rare, are certainly to be found in western Szechwan, and we saw one fine skin in the capital. Unfortunately, when one of these beasts does appear, he attracts so much attention that he becomes a marked animal from that time on; and though his greatest asset is the prodigious fear he excites in the native mind, he is hunted down sooner or

later unless he removes himself out of the neighbourhood. Undoubtedly the most interesting animals on Omi itself were the monkeys, medium-sized tailless animals probably belonging to the baboon family; there appeared to be at least two species of them. In the summer they are found on the cliffs and in the trees towards the summit of the mountains at about 8,000 feet, though as the summit is covered with snow for four or five months in the year, they no doubt descend to lower levels in the winter. They might be found in great troops of twenty or thirty, especially after recent rain, but were very capricious in their movements; sometimes we would not see one for a week or more. All animals on a sacred mountain like Omi are protected and the tameness of these monkeys was quite wonderful. They would sit within a few feet of you as you ascended the steps, and steal the candles from the pilgrims who were coming up the mountain to perform their religious ceremonies; indeed the coolies had to watch their loads carefully when the monkeys were on the prowl. They had no fear of man, for they were never molested; and thinking of the deer already referred to, which only feared men in so far as they had been taught to—that is within a range of a hundred yards or so, being merely interested in his presence beyond that range, there is food for reflexion upon the real attitude of wild animals in general towards man.

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